THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War 50¢

Vol. 20, No.2 Summer 1990

A document revealed to VVAW shows complicity by U.S. in development of Phoenix and COINTELPRO-type operation

TOP SECRET PHILIPPINE ARMY DOCUMENT REVEALED

TURN TO CENTERFOLD (PAGES 12, 13)

'Nam Vet Political Prisoner

Free Geronimo Pratt

Pat McCann
VVAW Maryland

Political prisoners in South Africa, most notably Nelson Mandla of the ANC, are in the news these days. Bracelets identifying political prisoners and the year they were imprisoned appear on the wrists of anti-apartheid activists. Eight ranking Azanian political prisoners of the ANC and the PAC recently won freedom from prison in South Africa.

Closer to home, however, little attention is given to America's political prisoners. One such prisoner if Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt, incarcerated for 20 years for a murder he did not commit.

Geronimo Pratt was the leader of the Los Angeles Black Panthers in 1968, and deputy defense minister of the national Black Panter Party. Geronimo is also a decorated veteran, who served in the 101st Airborne in Vietnam and later in the Dominican Republic.

Geronimo was convicted in 1972 for the murder of Caroline Olson in Santa Monica, California in 1968. At the time he was 400 miles away in Oakland at a national Black Power conference. He was convicted on the perjured testimony of an FBI informant, one Julius Butler. Caroline Olson's wounded husband made a positive identification of a different person, but this was suppressed by the prosecution, as was the fact that Butler was an FBI informant.

Geronimo Pratt is the victim of an FBI frame-up. As part of J. Edgar Hoover's CounterIntelligence Program (COINTELPRO), the L.A. FBI established "Operation #1" to neutralize Geronimo because of his leadership of the Panthers. Additional FBI dirty tricks include the fact that the FBI placed at least 3 informants on Pratt's legal defense team, suppressed the testimony of FBI Special Agent Wesley Swearingen that Geronimo was framed, "lost" wiretaps of the Oakland Black Panther Party Headquarters during the time Geronimo claimed to be there, and still refuses to honor court subpoenas to release evidence necessary to prove

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FRAGGIN'

Sp 5 Willy(Ret.)

A.K.A.
Bill Shunas

On vacation last summer I was with a group of people who came upon some Native American pictographs etched into a huge rock ouside a cave. Our group--unfortunately--included a certain anesthesiologist who took one look and made some comment about "the savages and their drawings." My wife--as she is prone to do--immediately and caustically proceeded to tell this unrepentent yuppie about the thousand years of culture and civilization these people had bfore the white man ever washed up upon the shores of North America.

Now, the whole incident was of little significance except that it got me to thinking about the word "savage" which is not too much in common use nowadays although it should be. When I retruend to the so-called civilized world a week or so later, I got out my trusty dictionary and looked up "savage." Old Webster used words like wild, barbarous, rude, brutal and cruel. Sort of reminded me of a lot of this country's leaders.

Seriously. Why do we talk in such refined terms about our political and commerical leaders? Just because they graduated from Dartmouth, wear a $953 suit and know that the salad fork goes on the left (or is it the right?). That doesn't mean that they aren't savages. Take a man like Elliot Abrams, Reagan's point man on the whole Nicaragua thing and current advocate of CIA assassination plots. Is not this pseudo-intellectual wild and rude? Were not the policies he pushed and carried out, policies that were brutal and cruel to the people of Central America?

Of course there are plenty of savages in Washington besides Elliot Abrams. Look onto the Senate floor, that arena of alleged sophistication, to someone like Senator Jesse Helms. It is not only that this man votes for and supports the kinds of barbarity that Elliot Abrams pushes. Helms as the Senator from the tobacco industry pushes his own kind of cruelty on the American people.

According to recent testimony of outgoing Surgeon General Everett Koop, 390,000 people a year die as a result of smoking. (Now, I don't know how he could possibly come up with that figure. I'm sure some of those people died more from environmental pollution, Agent Orange, stress or an overdose of sucrose. Nevertheless, the 390,000 figure gives us an idea of the major league ball park in which we are playing). Everyone knows that smoking kills, but because of the likes of Jesse Helms and friends the government condones and promotes the use of tobacco. So what does this say about Jesse Helms? Savage? Barbarian?

Or look to the corporate world. There you find nameless executives who have the biggest home,s the finest cars and memberships in the most exclusive country clubs. And many of their number have earned their millions because of their skill at mking life miserable, dangerous and short for this nation's working people.

Paul Douglas Jr is one of these little known representatives of the corporate world. Chief Executive Officer of the Pittston Company, he and his friends came up with an offer to the miners in their employ that precipitated the recently ended long and bitter strike against them by the United Mine Workers of America. Is it not cruel to cut off the pension plan due these workers after years of service? Is it not barbarous to abandon the health plan of 130,000 retirees, widows and disabled miners--this in an industry with a high accident rate and the dreaded black lung disease? Is it not savage to try to bury people while the blood is still warm?

Certainly the Reagan years, and now the Bush years have brought many of these type of people to Washington. Some of these people may really believe in the "trickle-down theory," but most are there to rip-off and run. And when they make out their budgets, they take away housing money and create more homeless, they take food from the mouths of poor children and medical care away from the ill. Tell me there aren't some savage people residing in Washington.

Smugness seems to be one of the characteristics of a ruling class. In the case of the U.S. of A., that smugness includes a belief in their own self-rightousness which combines with awesome power to trample whoever happens to be in the way.

Not that they would do these things themselves. They have overseers for that. They are genteel. They wear $953 suits, kis their wives, hug their children and have the ability to discern which is the best wine. They may not even be aware of the cruelty they inflict. Nevertheless they are the modern-day barbarians. The manifestations of the use and abuse of their power are wild, rude, brutal and cruel. That is what is known as a savage, and it is time to bring back the word.

In October

National Steering Committee Meeting

The VVAW National Office is pleased to announce that plans are being made for the 1990 VVAW National Meeting, to be held in Chicago on the 2nd weekend of October, 1990.

All interested VVAW members are invited to participate in the meeting; other interested individuals are welcome to attend. Please let the VVAW National Office know if you are interested, and also if there are agenda items which you feel should be discussed.

In the past several years, the meetings have been held on Saturday, usually beginning around noon, and have been completed by 6 or 7 PM. Saturday evening includes some kind of social event where we can talk in a less formal setting. We leave Sunday open in case the business of the meeting carries on beyond Saturday, though that has not been the case in recent years.

We will get out more specific information as the time of the meeting approaches; if you want this information, please let us know.

Cult uses VVAW name

Beware of the RCP

As VVAW prepares for a full calendar of national, regional and local activities, we must issue our usual disclaimer. A bunch calling itself "VVAW-AI" are not us, do not represent us, have nothing to do with us.

While we are loathe to give them anymore press, we must point out the deceitful nature of their activities which have, in the past, led to some confusion in various parts of the country.

"VVAW-AI" is in no way an organization. To quote from an open letter put out by the NY/NJ Coordinating committee of VVAW: "VVAW-AI is not a faction, caucus, or part of VVAW. It is not affiliated with us in any way. 'VVAW-AI' is actually the creation of the Revolutionary Communist Party, an ultra-left sect whose main activities appear to be to pump up the rhetorical level and disrupt any organization or movement they get involved in and to create provocations and violent confrontations at demonstrations whenever possible."

Without exception, "VVAW-AI" is a couple of Vietnam vets from the New York and New Jersey area and anyone else who will wear their gear (almost always non-veterans) to gain publicity.

If you see these creeps somewhere, don't dignify them by paying any attention to them. Tell your friends that these pathetic individuals (VVAW-AI) are petty, programmed frauds.

If you have questions, let us know and we'll do whatever necessary to answer them.

Kansas City

Vietnam Veterans Television

The VVAW National Office and Vietnam Veterans Television (VVTV), a sister project of the Kansas City Chapter's Vietnam Veterans Radio Network have begun the VVAW VIDEO HISTORY RESTORATION AND ARCHIVAL PROJECT. The Project's overall goals are:

1) To collect, catalog, store and maintain as complete a film history of VVAW as possible.

2) To serve as VVAW's film-video restoration and production center.

All VVAW chapters, members and friends are asked to send any videos, films, and "special" still photos they have of VVAW activities to VVTV. VVTV will repair any film damage possible; transfer the videos, films, and photos to 3/4 inch "master" film for the VVAW Video History Archive; and return you original videos, films and photos (restored as needed and if possible) at **no charge**. The 3/4 inch "master" film can then be transferred onto virtually any video format, including "consumer" VHS.

Please send your videos, films and photos to VVAW/VVTV, 7807 N Avalon, Kansas City, MO 64152. If you have any questions, please call John at (816) 587-5966.

On Peace And Our Responsibility

The Challenge of the '90s

Barry Romo
National Coordinator

Photo by Dan Steiger

With the ending of the *Cold* War comes the beginning of the *Drug* War. With the closing of military bases at home comes the expansion of the military.

In fact one new naval base in Italy alone will cost more than all the savings from the domestic base closings.

Gorbachev talks and acts to ensure peace. He brings troops home, cuts troops abroad, allows elections and hostile governments right on his own boarder.

Bush and the U.S. on the other hand are expanding U.S. presence. A cut in Germany, an expansion in Italy, a cut in Korea, expansion into Peru, continual pressures in the Philippines and *Honduras, support for Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia,* the death squads and ARENA Government in El Salvador, continued subversion of Cuba and Nicaragua and an invasion of Panama.

The peace dividend is nothing more than wishful thinking on the part of the news media and some leftists who think that the U.S. government will change its fundamental existence without a fight. A gigantic, bloody brawl at that.

The U.S. government hasn't been spending all that money on stealth bombers, submarines, atomics bombs, and canons and on and on because the Soviet Union forces us to.

As long as I've been alive we used the weapons of destruction not on the USSR, but on Korea, Guatemala, Cuba, Lebanon, Philippines, Vietnam., Laos, Cambodia, Dominican Republic, Nicaraguan and so on!

Our struggle didn't stop with the coming down of the Berlin wall or the Soviet troop pull out in Afghanistan. It has gotten harder.

Sure, its easier now because red baiting doesn't have the bite it had ten years ago. And democracy and independence via western Europe) are great. But people in Third World countries used to get aid, financial, political and military from the U.S.S.R. that they won't get now.

North Vs South

The struggle has shifted from East vs West to North vs South--from superpower confrontation and contention to straight rich vs poor, industrialized vs developing world. Imperialism isn't dead. Its expanding. Its growing. And its centered right here in the good old U.S.A.

We have a struggle on our hands--one that means we have to confront reality and cast aside illusion. We have to continue to build the movement against intervention by confronting political power, education and building international political ties.

The movement around Central America had many victories. Among them, cutting off all aid to the contras while the Senate was controlled by the Republicans. This people's victory forced the crime that became the Iran/Contragate scandal involving the highest levels of the Reagan administration. Reagan and the boys were on the run and they knew it.

But we did not follow up on our victory. People-to-people became the slogan and medical aid, trucks and trips became primary. Tons of money was raised and tones of thousands of people visited Central America.

Yet we could not stop aid to the contras today. Not only that, but we also could not even keep a human rights provision on aid to the death squad government in El Salvador.

Stop Low Intensity War

Our primary job, our duty, is to stop the U.S. government and its strategy of Low Intensity War. While aid is good we cannot hope to match the damage done in lives and money by our government to its international victims.

During the Vietnam War we did very little people-to-people aid yet we stopped the war. More aid to Vietnam would have been good but the primary thing--limiting our own government by making support for the war politically costly, undermining the military and building broad support--was key. And its key now.

The American people have to know their enemies and friends. They have to understand the difference between the contras and the Sandinistas, Chamarro and Ortega. That means more than flying someone else's flag. That means education, not sloganering.

We've all confronted our boss at work about better working conditions, attended PTA meetings about school curriculum, or attended city council meetings about poor service to the neighborhood.

On one level we understand that we have to confront that local situation while working toward that strike, change in school board or end to a municipal administration.

On a national level we have to demand and end to intervention, that "our" representative listen and act according to our wishes while we work for a change in the whole damn system.

The Vietnam Veterans Radio Network

has begun a fund-raising effort, and is asking for tax-deductable contributions toward providing VVRN's 'regular' weekly educational programming, at no charge, to America's growing family of Community Radio Stations; and to provide for the no-charge satellite transmisssion of 'special' VVRN and Vietnam Veterans TeleVision (VVTV) educational programming, making it available to millions of homes and thousands of schools across the country. To show our appreciation for your $10.00 contribution, VVRN will send you your choice of the three audio tapes shown below...OR...in return for your contribution of $25.00, VVRN will send you all three tapes. THANKS!

Vietnam Veterans Radio Network

The Best Of VVRN Volume I
Your Host - Former Airman First Class George Biswell

SIDE 1: The 'Wall'
SIDE 2: VVA Mary, Dragon Ships, Agent Orange, UCMJ

Vietnam Veterans Radio Network

The Best Of VVRN Volume II
Your Host - Former Airman First Class George Biswell

SIDE 1: Nam/Woodstock, D. J.'s Dream, R & R
SIDE 2: Happy Mortarer, CIA/Pheonix, DEROS

Enclosed is my tax-deductable contribution of $_____ (plus $1 Postage and Handling for each tape rerequested) to VVAW/VVRN.
Please send the tape(s) marked below:

VOL. I ☐ VOL. II ☐ DC III ☐

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Enclosed is my tax-deductable contribution of $25.00 (plus $3 Postage and Handling).
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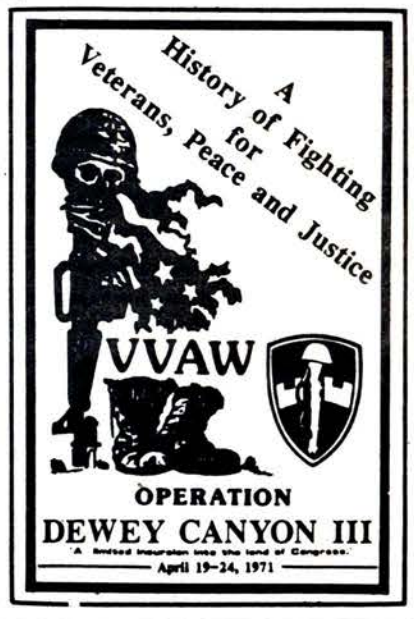
Send Check or Money Order To: VVAW/VVRN
P.O. Box 414838 K.C., Mo. 64141



Kent and Jackson State, 1970
A History

KENT STATE--OHIO--1970

As the war in Vietnam continued to escalate, so did the anti-war movement on campuses nationwide. After the announcement of the invasion of Cambodia, things escalted at a fast pace leading to the murders of 4 students at Kent State on May 4, 1970.

On May 4, approximately 3,000 Kent State students gathered at their usual rally site to protest the invasion of Cambodia and also to protest the invasion of their campus by the Ohio National Guard, sent in as a result of rallies earlier in the week.

When the peaceful rally began with anti-war slogans, the Guardsmen began to march toward the gathering carrying rifles and bayonets. As a great deal of tear gas was thrown, students ran away.

The Guardsmen followed over Blanket Hill where a few students responded by throwing rocks which fell short of their target. After aiming their rifles at the students, the Guardsmen turned and retreated back up the hill but, as they reached the top, "C" troop suddenly turned simultaneously, raised their weapons and fired into the crowd.

During the 13 seconds of gunfire, nearly 100 bullets were fired into a crowd of unarmed students. Investigations have shown there were no snipers and no rock-throwing at the time of the shooting. When the firing ceased, four students lay dead and nine others lay wounded.

JACKSON STATE--MISSISSIPPI--1970

Kent State was not the end of the violence against students by their government. On May 14, 1970, two African-American students were murdered at Jackson State College. According to the "Jackson State Massacre,"

"On the night of Thursday, May 14, crowds of students and stret people were again out along Lynch and against there was an air of disturbance. A rumor developed that Fatyette Mayor Charles Evers had been shot. This sparked the burning of a city dump truck which was parked in front of the men's dorm near the corner of Lynch and Pretise. A fire engine was called in and police and highway patrolment assmebled at that corner with "Thompson's Tank," a riot truck equipped with spotlights and a machinegun turret. Several hundred nationals guardsmen backed up the approximately 180 police and patrolmen. This was before midnight. About the same time another fire was set with brush and sawhorses at the corner of Dalton and Lynch Streets. Another fire engine came south to extinguish that fire.

Jerry Delaughter, a reporter for the Memphis Commerical Appeal, was at the corner of Pearl and Dalton one block north of Lynch when the fire engine came by. He started to follow the engine but turned back when he heard sounds which may have been gunfire coming from the Southwest. He has stated that he is not certain the sounds were gunshots, that he did not know where they came from, but that they may have come from the vicinity of the men's dorm. This occurred at a time when the police and patrolmen were in front of the men's dorm. It is known that at approximately this time police or patrolmen fired into the men's dorm. It is not known if anyone was hit by any of the shots fired at the dorm. A Jackson State student, Gregory Antoine, stated that a bottle and a dustpan were thrown from the men's dorm before the police fired.

Approximately 15 minutes after the sounds (which may have been shots fired at the men's dorm) he heard the heavy barrage fired at the women's dorm. Stuydents say that immediately before the barrage at the women's dorm the police and patrolmen marched from in front of the men's dorm east down Lynch St until they were directly in front of the women's dorm. This would account for the 15-minute interval.

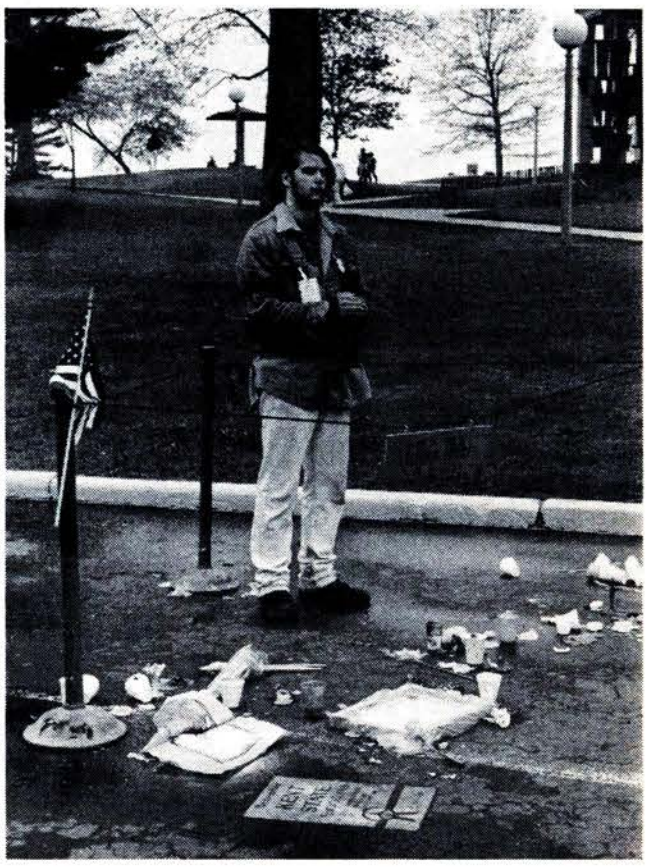
There were crowds of men and women students in front of the women's dorm and across Lynch St in front of the Dining Hall. When the patrolmen approached, some of the students fled. Others said "Why should we leave? We're not doing anything." Shortly after the officers stopped in front of the women's dorm, a bottle landed in the street on the south behind the officers. When this occurred, spotlights were trined on both sides of the street, probably from "Thompson's Tank." An officer was heard to say, "Ladies and Gentlemen..." He was interrupted by a few scattered shots followed by a heavy barrage of gunfire which lasted for 25 seconds (according to a news tape.)

Every student interviewed said there was not a shot before patrolmen began to fire. Some students say a bottle was thrown, others say no. They all say that without warning the patrolmen fired several hundred rounds of ammunition including shotguns and automatic rifles into the women's dorm, the crowd in front of the dorm, and the crowd around the Dining Hall across the street from the dorm. There were over 150 bullet marks in the windows and metal panels of the 5-story stairwell at the west entrance to the women's dowm. There were many bullet marks in the first and second floors of the front middle section of the dorm. There were also bullet harmks on the north side of the Dining Hall.

When the shooting stopped, two people lay dying. Five other men and four young ladies were also wounded by gunshots.

Photo by Dan Steiger

Photo by Dan Steiger



P.S.N. member Kurt Myers, stnading vigil at site of Jeffrey Miller murder. Photo by Dan Steiger

Kent State

Photos by Dan Steiger

Bill Davis
VVAW National Office

It rained most of the weekend at Kent. The occasional sunburst through the overcast *seemed oddly inappropriate. The mood was* somber on the 4th.

VVAW's operation Blanket Hill, named for the spot the Ohio National Guard stood committing murder and mayhem, was a resounding success. VVAW members from the East & Midwest came together and created a presence during the week, equaling or surpassing our past efforts there.

Our base of operations named Firebase Carmody, spoke well of Michael Carmody, a founding member of the KSU chapter. Mike checked out of life and VVAW last year but he would have enjoyed this one. In 1971 he and some other brothers built a replica of the ROTC building destroyed in 1970. When the students and media gathered to see this model constructed of "borrowed" ammunition cases from nearby Ravenna arsenal, they torched it and laughed. He would have laughed on this weekend, too.

We often laughed that the weather over the many years was so bad. It seemed it had only been ideal when the guard worked its havoc. Sitting in the Gin Mills on Water and Franklin Streets talking with old Kent chapter bothers, one expected the doors to fly back and the room to fill with his booming laughter. The war that killed the four students had claimed yet another.

The upside of events included the strength of today's student movement, the precision and organization of VVAW throughout the four days, the great solidarity work that went on with VVAW and our friends from the Philippines, Nicaragua, Cambodia, El Salvador and more.

Our contributions to the vigils, marches, programs, workshops, the silent protest with the students at the "official" program dedicating a "memorial" to the slain and wounded (the memorial if called minimalist would be an exaggeration)--all these things were good.

Following the somber notes of May 4th, the PSN Conference was a welcome relief and an uplifting experience for us older folks. Yes, the RCP had their flag burning workshop, explaining the "significance" of burning symbols in-

stead of commitment to real political activities and work. After the RCP put some of their own meager forces to sleep with a stunning performance, the PSN students proceeded to rip the RCP up, bringing them to task for leaching off of other people's work and activities, with their infantile arson. VVAW members barely got a word in edgewise, so thorough was the student's wrath.

Some young students from KSU expressed the opinion that they "hoped all this would go away after the 20th Anniversary of the killings."

VVAW has been there all along and will be there again. Murder can never be forgiven or forgotten. Crimes do not go unpunished. People like Mike Carmody and all the brothers and sisters who have fought for justice at Kent and Jackson State, I hear their chanting, marching and laughter down through the years. VVAW is firm in its resolve, we won't return to Kent--we never left!

Firebase Carmody

Operation Blanket Hill

Allison Krause/Jeffrey Miller/ William Schroeder/ Sandra Scheuer

"Four Dead In Ohio"

Alan Canfora/John Cleary/Thomas Grace/Dean Kahler
Joseph Lewis/Donald MacKenzie/James Russell
Robert Stamps/Douglas Wrentmore

Anne Luginbille
Chicago Chapter
VVAW

As midnight on May 3, 1990, approached, I stood at Firebase Carmody, after the candle-lit silent march around the Kent campus; the commemoration was ending and the all-night vigil was about to begin. The names of the 13 students kept running through my mind in a sort of litany. Dave Stiffler (New York) and Mitch Kuhn (Chicago) were on each side of me, in front of the banner reading "VVAW - Operation Blanket Hill - May 3-4, 1990". While we stood in our formation, people began to come and talk with us; the banner attracted attention and photographers took pictures. An older couple in their late 60s or early 70s walked over and told us they were glad that we were there and said that there were more people at this observation than in the past few years. The man then said, "Let me introduce ourselves; I'm Bob Canfora and this is my wife, Marie. We're the parents of Al Canfora." Dave, Mitch, and I told them that we were honored to meet them and to be part of the ceremony. They left soon thereafter, but Mr. Canfora then returned, bringing with him another older man. He introduced the three of us to the newcomer, who said, "I'm pleased to meet you, and I'm glad that you came. I'm the father of Sandra." As he and Mr. Canfora took their leave of us, Mr. Scheuer said, "Perhaps Sandy's death meant that fewer soldiers had to die in Vietnam." I watched them wallk away and could not keep the tears from my eyes.

Vietnam Veterans Tell Their Story

Recollections

May 4, 1970

Ken Johnson

Three years after I'd finished my tour with the Ist Infantry in 'Nam, the "crack" of that first bullet going by still brought the reaction: flat on the ground crawling towards the nearest cover, in this case, a Volkswagon. All I can remember is thinking about how I'd helped a grad student friend pull the motor out of one of those cars and how sure I was that those National Guard M-1 Garands could shoot through the best 3 VW's ever made.

As the shooting stopped, the students jumped up and started running around. I was probably the only non-wounded person still flat on the ground. I finally decided to get up (slowly) and have a look around. The Guard was moving over the hill back towards the Commons from that spot over a hundred meters away from which they'd fired. I didn't spot anybody down immediately in front of me.

Behind me, it was a different story. Directly to my rear, a couple of the bullets that passed over the VW hit two kids. One, a guy, had several people around him and seemed to be hit in the back. I went over towards the other, a young woman, and wished I hadn't. She was shot through the neck and was gushing blood. Her arms and legs were starting to twitch. The guy trying to help her asked me what he should do. I just kind of looked at him and shook my head without saying anything. Maybe somebody saw a survivor of a wound like that in 'Nam. I never did. It was only later that I learned the woman was Sandy Scheuer. The guy turned out to be Bill Schroeder--he died of his wound, too.

*****

In a way it was strangely like a firefight. You know that only a very short time passed...it only seemed like it went on forever. The entire event which began down on the Commons at noon ended in the shootings about twenty minutes later.

We'd gathered on the Commons to protest Nixon's insane invasion of Cambodia and the occupation of the Campus by the Ohio National Guard. Although the Guard was gathered across the Commons, they were stationary there until they sent out a jeep with a guy with a bullhorn to inform us that we were an "unlawful assembly" and should disperse immediately. At that point, a couple of rocks got thrown and the chant, "ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR! WE DON'T WANT YOUR FUCKIN' WAR!" got going. The Guard then cut loose with a barrage of tear gas shells and canisters. We heaved as many back as we could, but the concentration of gas finally pushed us up and over Taylor Hill into the area of the Prentice Hall parking lot and the practice football field with the Guard moving up behind us.

I'd gotten badly gassed and sat down on a curb well away from the crowd trying to get my breath back while not vomiting all over the place. After a couple of minutes, I got back up and noticed that the Guard was now on the practice field and was heading back up toward Taylor Hall. I figured they were going to regroup with the larger body of Guard still in the Commons area or possibly those Guardsmen were in the process of coming around behind us. I headed over towards a couple of people I knew to suggest that we head over towards Tri-Towers (a dorm complex) to regroup and get more demonstrators.

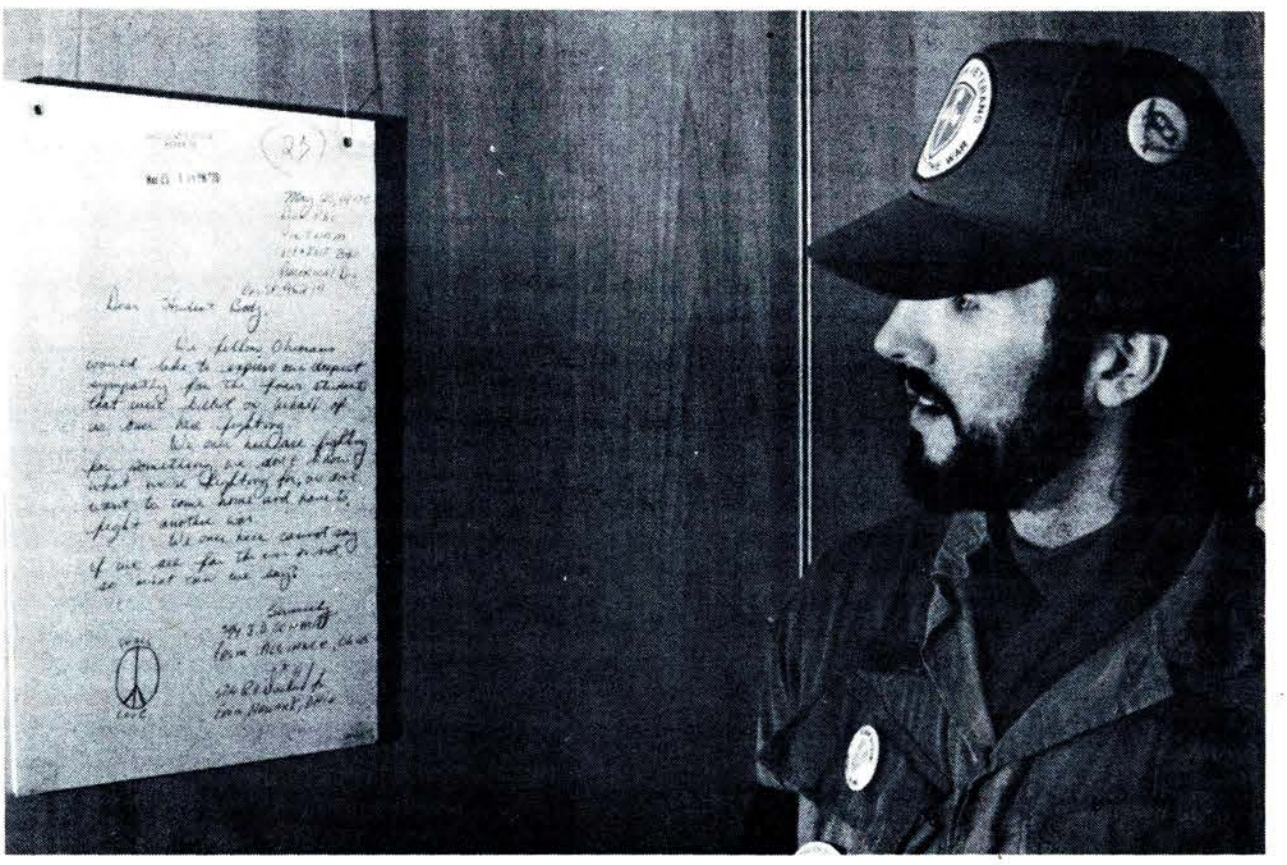
As I drew even with the back of the VW which would end up being my cover, I glanced up at the Guard. Nobody was all that close to them as they stopped by the pagoda behind Taylor Hall.

The last thought I recall before I hit the ground was, "What the fuck are those yo-yo's pointing their rifles at?"

****

It was point and counterpoint. Nixon and his political and military misleaders sought to broaden the war into Cambodia to crush a patriotic people's righteous resistance. In another vicious outrage, the same gang tried it at Kent to smash domestic protest against his insanity.

History says he went 0 for 2.



Tim Andruss, VVAW Chicago, reads a letter to KSU students dated May 20, 1970: "Dear Student Body, We Fellow Ohioans would like to express our deepest sympathy for the four students that were killed on behalf of us over here fighting...We don't want to come home and have to fight another war." It was sent by two soldiers in Vietnam. Photo by Dan Steiger

The View From The Club

Bill Davis
VVAW National Office

My immediate memory of May 4th, 1970 was the warm sunny spring day that began with the promise of a pleasant afternoon and evening away from Lockbourne Air Force Base in the vicinity of the Ohio State University campus area, a place I lived without having to play air force.

Truly, I was the All-American alien boy. Two years in Southeast Asia--one in Vietnam, one in Thailand--had returned me to a place populated with strange people with stranger customs and an odd culture: home?

The Air Force place was not so exotic. Unfortunately it was familiar with drab structures and boring landscapes populated by either disinterested folks like myself or creatures called "lifers," some of whom physically resembled pigs but rarely exhibiting as much intelligence. I wiled away my duty hours and the four months I had left in the service by pissing off the lifer/pig creatures as much as possible.

Since the distribution of anti-war literature was my sole purpose, outside of an occasional meal, paycheck and laundry, in playing at Lockbourne AFB, the course of political events that spring captured by imagination and energy.

On the 100th anniversary of Ohio State University, the place exploded. Black students with demands for legitimate programs for minorities, for women's programs, the on-going anti-war movement all combined that day and boiled over into the streets. Local police running amok on farm day, blanketing the city with a cloud of tear gas, state police, campus police, national guard, people throwing things, shooting at each other, barricades, riots, concertina wire, bayonets, gas masks. Man. Now this was something familiar! And the participants were for the most part amateurs; what fun!

Each day several of us would shuck our fatigues and rush off to the university to observe or participate as the mood struck us. Gradually, the weight of living in a literal police state complete with armored vehicles and machine guns and marching troops ended our fun.

That afternoon, May 4th, Little Richie came bounding around a generator set I was leaning on pretending to be occupied. I was alone in that part of a vast aircraft hanger, the first termer E-1's and 2's I was supposedly instructing having long since evaporated into the cracks of the air base.

Little Richie said, "Man, there's some bad shit going down. Fuckin' weekend warriors gunned down some college kids."

"Where," I asked, knowing they had pulled out of Columbus.

"I don't know, some place called Kent State here in Ohio," he said.

"Listen," I said, "You find Big Richie an' his wheels, we're gonna book-up for town mos schosh, you dig? They ain't gonna miss you but I'll have to give 'em some bullshit to slide. Make it dude."

Little Richie was gone, his specialty; I hurried across the hanger toward the maintenance offices. Guys called to me, "Ya hear, Ja hear Davis?" "Yeah, yeah," I responded, "Catch you later, OK?"

Up the steps, into the office, there he is, Chief Master Sergeant Porker. I thought to myself, "It would be a lot easier if he didn't look like a pig to boot."

All smiles, the bunch of them, like we just won the war--the jerks. "Sarge, I gotta go to payroll and straighten out my clothing allotment pay."

"Bullshit, Davis, you're not gonna go anywhere." And before I could say anything, he added, "Shot the fuck outta you little commie buddies, huh?"

Too late I slid over the edge: "Fuck you pig face, too bad they didn't miss and get you. You're dead meat anyway if you jump the pond. If Charles don't get your, Oscar Meyer will. Write anything you want, asshole, I'm leaving."

He damn near swallowed his cigar whole, turned red as a beet and I thought his Alco nose would explode. His fellow pigs and their suck boys all stood there with their jaws down. I turned away out the door and out of the

TURN TO NEXT PAGE

Veterans Helping Veterans

Nicaragua/U.S.

On February 17, 1990 VVAW member Louis DeBenedette poured human blood on the gate of the While House designated as an entrance for wheel chair disabled. The protest was aimed at the U.S. interference in the Nicaraguan elections and the U.S. support of the Contras. DeBenedette was joined by other members of VVAW and friends. The protest was a result of a joint effort by both the organization of Revolutionary disabled (ORD), (disabled Sandinista Veterans wounded by the U.S.-backed Contras and members of VVAW NY/NJ.) Human blood was poured at the wheel chair entrance in solidarity with the wheel chair entrance in solidarity with the wheel chair paralyzed vets in Nicaragua who had been on a campaign to re-elect President Daniel Ortega. The blood poured exposed the blood that had been shed by the U.S.-backed Contras.

On May 1, two members of the organization of Revolutionary disabled, both paralyzed Sandinista Veterans arrived in the United States for medical treatment. They were invited by VVAW to attend the march and conference at Kent State University on May 4. During an evening social both were presented with symbolic purple hearts made of glass and invited to become members of VVAW. In turn, the Nicaraguan vets presented Barry Romo with a Sandinista flag as a reminder that the Revolution in Nicaragua must continue and that together we must struggle to end all U.S. aggression and intervention in Nicaragua and the world.

VVAW exchanges flags, hats, armbands and buttons with O.R.D. We each became members without dues of the others' organization. Photo by Dan Steiger

Both Nicaraguan veterans are on a tour to raise funds for their organization (ORD). The need donations for gas, spare parts, salaries for wheel chair makers. if your chapter or individuals can help with as little as $10 a month as a sustainer please send a check to: ORD Fund, PO Box 21, Willimantic, CT 06226 each month.

Veterans without uniforms--"Nica" vets Fernando Lopez and Hernandez with VVAW members. Photo by Dan Steiger

Organization of the Revolutionary Disabled

Under the Somoza dictatorship, the people suffered from poverty and other misusages. The basic needs of the disabled were never taken care of: the official policy of exploitation came together with illiteracy, unemployment and economic crisis.

This situation was most critical for people with physical, mental and sensorial disabilities; there was almost no assistance available for the disabled, leading people to believe mistakenly that public charity was their only means of survival.

It was with the revolution that it first became possible to start out a process of social transformation which obviously included the advancement of the disabled hand in hand with that of the revolution's.

As an expression of the state's good-will there are several rehabilitation programs for all the disabled people. This revolutionary gesture stimulated a group of war veterans to found the O.R.D. in order to seek solutions to some of the problems which their disability created.

As a result of the unfair war of aggression impose by the American Government the disabled community has grown considerably; to such an extent that the efforts made to meet their basic needs are not enough.

THE O.R.D.'s GOAL

Its main goal is to help the disabled merge progressively into the mainstream of Nicaragua's life. This is attained by way of stimulating their remaining capabilities, self-esteem and care and skills development.

To achieve that goal we draw upon national and international aid and have the following programs:

1. It is our aim to work on the elimination of architectural obstacles in hospitals, public buildings, and private homes. We continue to solve transportation problems so that the disabled can reach their workplaces and educational centers. Our efforts are aimed likewise to improve health care and all other available services. We will also promote the drafting of laws to guarantee the rights and duties of the disabled as citizens.

2. In order to change the popular misconceptions about our community we are carrying out an educational campaign utilizing available media and also preparing didactic material along with talks, seminars and encounter sessions.

3. Sports, culture and entertainment are basic activities that we promote; they help the disabled while at the same time projecting the disabled citizen's new image.

To meet our various needs the O.R.D. offers services such as:

-Wheelchair making and repair.
-Distribution of medical tools and orientation about their use.
-Offering channels to solve problems faced by members of our community.

As a consequence of the economic blockade and the intensification of the war our limitations have become more acute and most of the items needed for physical and medical rehabilitation are at present unusually scarce.

To fulfill these needs it is necessary to obtain equipment made only outside Nicaragua.

- -

Pledge/Donation Card

1. I/group wish to pledge $_____ per month for operational expenses of the ORD, Managua, Nicaragua.
2. I/group wish to dontate $_____ for operational expenses of the ORD, Managua, Nicaragua.

Make Tax Deductable Checks Payable to: VFP, ORD Fund
PO Box 21
Willimantic, CT 06226
(203) 423-3476

Name: _____
Address: _____
_____
Phone: _____

Pledges are not binding, give what you can.
All funds to to the Organization for the Revolutionary Disabled.

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

Vietnam Veterans Tell Their Story

Recollections

hanger, wishing for a camera or a frag or both.

Into the barracks, out of uniform, into civvies, Little Richie at the door, "Big Richie's at the Club."

"Let's go, " I said, everything around me a blur, Richie's portable radio booming out a near hysterical reporter on the local FM underground station: "Four dead, a dozen or more wounded, no National Guard casualties."

I'm pissed. Trembling, to Richie, "They're killing us, man, over there, over here, what the fuck."

Little Richie had no answer, just "Man, oh shit, man."

The NCO Club was pretty empty: two groups, one glum, one exhalted, at opposite ends of the bar.

"Hey, Big Richie, let's book."

"Sure, man. Let me finish this brew," he said.

"Fuck it, I'll buy you some in town."

From the other end of the bar a voice boomed, "What's the hurry, Sarge, join us for a drink; quite a celebration tonight, huh?"

"Fuck you and your loser lifer buddies, I wouldn't even shit near you."

Real time now. Everybody on their feet. "Kick you ass, boy." "See a boy, kiss his ass." "Yeah--yeah!" "Oh yeah!" Chairs, bottles, glasses--things seem slow in a rage. Sargeant Swine flopping on the floor, so easy--so good, too. Big Richie with the hook out the door into the car; I'm shaking all the way to town.

The fun was over. Four young people lay dead at Kent, two more at Jackson State in a hail of police bullets. My rage was surpassed by the students at OSU. If the events of two weeks earlier had a carnival atmosphere at times, now the students and demonstrators saw the raw power of the state and responded in kind. We were back in our element. Big Riche, short on long political riffs, would chuckle, dryly, "Death don't have no mercy in this land."

Their "crime" was their desire for peace in Korea

Free Im Su-Kyung and Fr. Kyu-Hyun

South Korean student **Im Su-Kyung** and Catholic Father, **Moon Kyu-Hyun,** broke the cold war status quo of Korea's division when they returned to south Korea from the north of August 15, 1989, by walking across the demilitarized zone (DMZ) that has separated Korea at the 38th parallel for the last 40 years. They were detained by the U.S. Army which patrols the southern side of the DMZ, and then handed over to south Korea's Agency for National Security Planning for arrest.

Ms Im and **Fr Moon** were immediately imprisoned and placed on trial for violation of south Korea's controversial National Security Law which forbids virtually all contacts with north Korea and carries the death penalty for the most severe infractions.

Ms Im traveled to north Korea last June to participate in the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students representing south Korea's leading student organization, the National Council of College Student Representatives.

While there, **Ms Im** also joined 400 international delegates from 30 countries, including the 16 that fought in the Korean War under the United National flag, in an International March for Peace and Reunification of Korea.

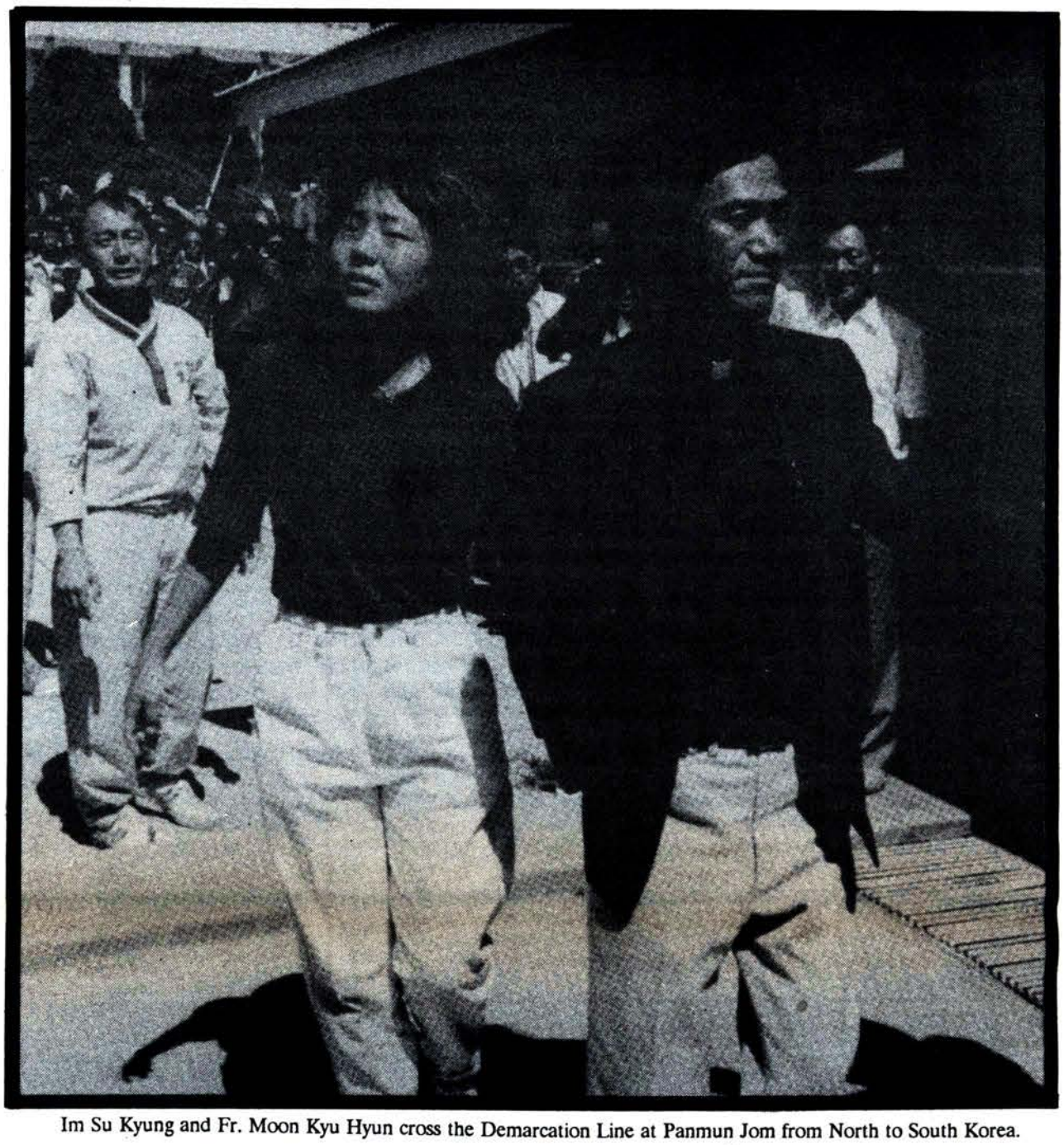
On June 30, 1989, **Ms Im** declared her intention to return to south Korea by crossing the DMZ on July 27, 1989, the 36th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice to which the U.S., North Korea and China were signatories. Noting that **Ms Im**, a Catholic, had placed her life at risk, the south Korean Association of Catholic Priests for Realization of Social Justice sent **Fr Moon Ky-Huyn** to accompany her across the DMZ.

Fr Moon told International Peace March delegates, "I share this place with **Su-Kyung** ready to die with her because we are determined to advance vigorously 'til the day of reunification when all of us become one, with her warm love of the nation alive in the hearts of the whole nation."

The United Nations Command, represented at the DMZ by the U.S. Army, refused their request to come home through the DMZ on July 27. The two then staged a six-day hunger strike supported by delegates of the International Peace march, during which time **Ms Im** proclaimed: "On August 15, I will come again and I will cross; it will be my final and decisive attempt; I will risk everything."

By their actions **Ms Im** and **Fr Moon** have come to symbolize the desire of the Korean people, in both the north and south, to achieve the peaceful reunification of their country free of interference from foreign powers.

They have joined the ranks of over 1300 political prisoners in south Korea who have been detained for violation of the National Security Law and related security statutes.



Im Su Kyung and Fr. Moon Kyu Hyun cross the Demarcation Line at Panmun Jom from North to South Korea.

DEMANDS

Noting the irony that **Ms Im Su-Kyung** and **Fr Moon Kyu-Hyun** have been sentenced to 10 and 8 years in prison for their act of national reconciliation while the West applauds the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, and...

That the U.S. Army, under the aegis of the United Nations Command, enforces Korea's division on behalf of the south Korean government by stationing its troops and nuclear weapons in the south and by its outright command of the south Korean Army,...

We the undersigned applaud the courage of **Ms Im** and **Fr Moon**, condemn the role played by the U.S. Army and the United Nations Command in facilitating their arrest by the south Korean government, and demand their immediate release.

We join the Korean people in calling for the abolition of the draconian National Security Law enforced primarily to imprison Koreans for their desires to achieve the peaceful and independent reunification of their country, and...

We call upon President George Bush, the Congress of the U.S. and United Nations Secretary General Mr Perez de Cuellar to create international conditions favorable to peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula by replacing the Korean War Armistice with a permanent Peace Treaty dissolving the United Nations Command and withdrawing U.S. troops and nuclear weapons from south Korea.

(For further information or contributions, contact the International Committee for Peace and Reunification of Korea, Box 73958, Washington, DC 20009-3958.)

Agent Orange Report

The Center for Disease Is Out of Control

Anne Bailey
Midwest Coordinator
VVAW

Recent "revelations" from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) regarding their latest Agent Orange "study" were made public. The press called VVAW for a comment and was very surprised that we are not surprised at the results.

Give us a break, folks! How could anyone really believe that the government would admit its complicity in poisoning GI's? How the hell would they get GI's to fight in their next little adventure?

We'll just have to keep fighting them until the last veteran affected by exposure if either compensated or is dead. Just as with post-traumatic stress, the government doesn't give benefits out of the goodness of its governmental heart. Veterans have to fight for every crumb.

People can call us "crybabies" all they want. But we don't cry about things--we do something about them. And what is there to do about this latest outrage? Well, the most important thing that vets can do for themselves is to get those medical records together and get to the VA for yet another Agent Orange screening, and another claim should be filed for disability.

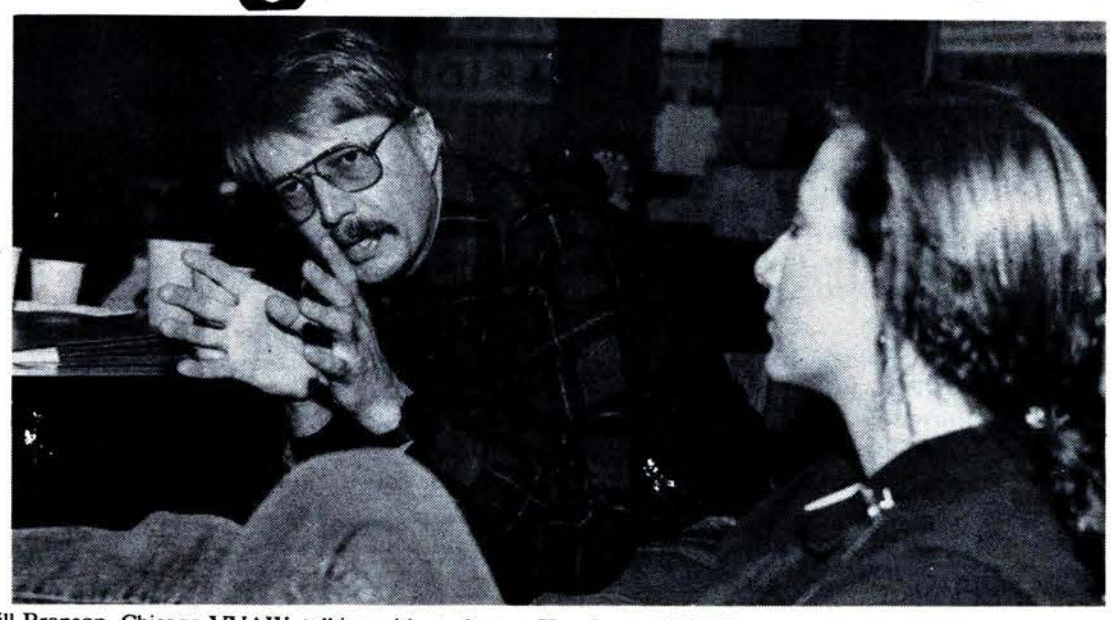
If you have cancer and have been told to get your affairs in order, the best thing you can do for the veterans who are left is to make an audio or videotape diary of your thoughts and experiences. Tell people what you'd like them to know--and, when you're done, send along a copy to VVAW: we'll find a way to get the information put to good use.

(Kansas City VVAW is putting together both audio and video presentations on our Vietnam experience; you can send information to them at Firebase KC, 7807 N Avalon, Kansas City, MO 64152)The Center for Disease Is Out of Control!

TURN TO NEXT PAGE

Counter Recruitment in the City

Stopping The Pentagon In High Schools



Bill Branson, Chicago VVAW, talking with student at Ken State. VVAW has a vision of war and the movement different from that usually heard. Photo by Dan Steiger.

"It's Spring--the Recruiters Must Be Swarming!"
--Ben Chitty

VVAW East Coast Coordinator

The Pentagon doesn't comment or divulge figures, but military recruiting activity seems to have picked up in New York City high schools. The pitch is tough to make. The job is dangerous--the Defense Department confirms that on the average, 1,500 men and women are killed every year in peacetime training accidents. The advantages aren't so obvious--one in three homeless men in New York is a vet. You can't quit if you don't like it--the Uniform Code of Military Justice doesn't recognize resignation from enlistment, or a change of heart. Besides, the young men and women now turning 18 are the children of the Vietnam generation, and families touched by the stupid and brutal futility of that war aren't so thrilled about military service: whatever they think about Vietnam, they know its veterans got a raw deal.

Still, the military signs up new recruits. Two recent controversies show some of the complications and contradictions of that process. In January, a Junior ROTC program was withdrawn from a Manhattan high school. In March, a high school teacher was informally reprimanded for inviting vets to speak about military service to her classes in Brooklyn.

In the spring of 1989, the Board of Education announced that the Air Force would run a JRTOC program in the high school renamed for Martin Luther King, the most prominent and influential apostle of non-violence in recent American history. Facing protests from teachers and students, the principal promised that the teachers could decide whether the school would accept the program. After a pair of debates between a retired Air Force General and Clarence Fitch (USMC, 1966-70, Vietnam 1967-68) from the New Jersey Chapter of VVAW, the teachers voted 2-1 against the program. But, when classes resumed in the fall, the JROTC program was in place, with two military science instructors paid by the Board. The teachers and students redoubled their efforts, organizing press conferences, class discussions, and testimony at Board meetings. Stressing the contradiction between military science and Dr King's teachings, the campaign enlisted several prominent local African-American politicians, packed two successive monthly meetings of the Board, and finally delivered the coup de grace with a personal letter from Coretta Scott King.

The debate shaped up differently in Brooklyn. For the second year, VVAW joined with Black Veterans for Social Justice, War Resisters League, and Advocates for Children, in the Military Counselling Project, a counter-recruitment program sponsored by the 12th Congressional District Peace Advisory Committee. The central Brooklyn district, which includes Bedford-Stuyvesant, is one of the poorest in the nation. Its representative, Major Owens, has supported the project out of concern for constituents who find that the military does not always deliver on its recruiters' promises.

The project offers speakers (mainly vets) and a video presentation ("Choice or Chance," produced by the Central Committee for Conscientious Orjectors) to parents' associations, guidance counselors, and junior and senior classes, and participates in career days and job fairs. It has been well received by students, teachers, parents. We make a good case. The armed forces rarely offer useful training; failure is easy and its consequences often disastrous for the recruit; finally, whatever the advertisements and brochures may say, the military is not about education or even adventure--it's about war. The recruiters find our message effective; rather than deal with the questions we raise, they'll pass on any particular school or fair for the time, hoping we'll fade back into the woodwork.

At Prospect Heights, one of the district's high schools, a friend of ours invited us to talk to her home room and science classes, and we did. Once we were there, other teachers asked us to speak to their own clases, and we went. But, when we called our friend to review the day's activity, she told us she was in trouble: an assistant principal had informally reprimanded her, and an invitation to return during Career Week was cancelled. Fortunately, the local teachers' union successfully protested on the grounds of free speech and the value in the educational process of debating real issues.

A cynical attempt to trivialize and denature Dr King's legacy. A heavy-handed try to silence a conscientious teacher. Important issues, yes, but not what's really going on. Four JROTC programs run in New York City, all in schools with overwhelmingly Black and Latin students. Several schools have applied for the program dislodged from King. And, in the 12th Congressional District, the assistant principals for guidance do not always return our calls or schedule our project. We saw the real problem in the stony faces of the Board as we spoke of recruiting abuses, military injustice, the horror of war. We heard it ourselves in the classrooms. What's the alternative?

The board sets policy for a school system in communities slammed by a collapsing economy, ravaged by the drug trade, occupied by the police, exploited by landlords, brutalized by corruption. The schools provide vocational guidance, career counseling for students looking at a bleak future--too few jobs, at less than subsistence wages; *too little housing, for too* much rent; too poor an education for a complex society spinning out of control. If the armed forces will take some of the best and brightest students--the teenagers with the self-discipline to resist the lure of criminal life and the ambition to ward off despair, that's an easy answer to a hard question. The military offers to get some of these young people out of the community, save them for some kind of future. If that's the best the public education system can do in 1990 New York City, who wants vets talking to students about any downside of military service?

We see their point, but it's not good enough. Sure, everyone wishes the world were a better place. Meanwhile, of course life does go on, and our children do have to make choices and start adult lives. But this option is special--it can get you killed for no good reason, this year in Panama, ext year in the Philippines, El Salvador, Korea, wherever the U.S. empire finds its investments threatened, its profits thwarted, its policies resisted. It's not good enough to offer to save some of our children by training and arming them to defend the society which destroys their homes, families, and friends.

One of the project's strengths is that the students know we tell the truth. We can't match the Pentagon's hype. We can't create jobs and scholarships. We can't convert the school system's custodial function into genuine education for democratic citizenship. We can't build a society where the best opportunities lie in service to the community, where life gets better, not worse. At least, not overnight--not in time for this year's crop of 18-year-olds. But, demanding equal time with the recruiters raises these questions, and talking to these young women and men may save some lives. We'll keep on talking.

(The author is a member of the NY Chapter of VVAW and the chapter liaison to the 12th Congressional District Military Counseling Project in Brooklyn.)

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

Agent Orange Report

Out of Control

do not fight for it. VA Programs under 8 years of Ronald Reagan were cut with a very big knife. We do not have enough hospital beds, enough case workers for claims, nor enough staff. If you are going to fight to win your disability, go one step and write to Congress to demand some money for VA programs. And visit you local VA hospital--vets need visits too.

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Tour U.S.

Israeli Peace Vets

From May 9 through June 4, 1990, two members of the Israeli veterans peace organization "Yesh Gvul: will be touring the Unites States and Canada. Yesh Gvul, Hebrew for "There is a Limit," is a grass-roots movement of Israeli reserve officers who are refusing to serve in the Israeli occupied territories. Since the beginning of the Palestinian uprising known as the Intifada, one thousand reservists have signed a Letter of Refusal, vowing that they will not participate in repressing the Palestinian uprising. Over 100 reservists have served 1-2 month jail sentences for upholding that vow when called up by the israeli government to serve in the occupied territories.

Yesh Gvul publishes a Soldier's Guidelines booklet which gives the practical, legal and moral support for soldier considering refusal. They sponsor public meetings and a telephone hot-line for those seeking counselling and advice about refusal. For their efforts, Yesh Gvul has been investigated by the israeli Security Services. And because of the courageous stand, Yesh Gvul is at the heart of the Israeli peace movement.

The tour is being sponsored by VVAW, Friend of Yesh Gvul, and the International jewish Peace Union as well as local chapters of New Jewish Agenda. Representing Yesh Gvul on the tour are Steve Langfur, an immigrant, originally form the U.S. and Hanoch Livneh, born in Israel. Steve Langfur hold a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Syracuse University. He has published numerous articles about the situation in the Occupied Territories. Hanoch Livneh, whose parents are survivors of the Holocaust, is one of the leading members of yesh Gvul in Israel.

Yesh Gvul has initialed an "adopt a soldier" program to help raise funds for the families of reserve soldiers who have refused service in the Occupied Territories. To obtain more information about adopting a soldier, contact:

Friends of Yesh Gvul
1678 Shattuck Ave., Box 6
Berkeley, CA 94709
415-848-9391

The tentative dates and locations for the tour are as follows:

May 24	Louisville
May 25, 26	Philadelphia
May 25	Ann Arbor/Detroit
May 26	Madison
May 27	Minneapolis
May 29, 30	San Francisco
May 29	Washington, DC
May 30	Atlanta
May 31	Los Angeles
May 31	Miami
June 1, 2	Gainesville
June 2	Tucson
June 3,4	Denver

Letters

VVAW welcomes letters, poems, articles, photos, jokes and donations of a monetary kind. Unfortunatly, we cannot guarentee we will use anything.

Afgan Veteran Adresses VVAW

Our feelings pained through the war are very much in common. You are older and more experienced and we believe that our communication would help us to solve many problems.

About two years have passed since the Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan. The dirty war was over at last. But, it had swallowed thousands of lives and had left thousands and thousands of injured individuals, broken souls and saddened fates. There are over 1 million (<1000000) participants in the Afghan war. Most of them are in need now. They are in lack of social, psychological and medical help for rehabilitation.

An Afghan syndrome--a heavyache disease--are suicides, drunkeness, drug addiction, bumming, crimes. Is it normal?

It is very important for us to know your experience of overcoming Vietnam syndrome. Pity it is, but in this country we have no chance to get elementary means for that, we could not be provided with a skillful help. It makes our life unbearable.

Perhaps you would be interested in our own way of activity and we would have an opportunity to cooperate. We want peace. We are looking forward to goodwill and consciousness. We are the real hopeful force together. The force of good and peaceloving.

Let us communicate together, live together and further.

With best regards for all of you,
Studio of experimental workmanship

Address:
USSR, LENINGRAD
191040
Ligovsky Prospect,65
"Xpam Mupa"
("Russian alphabet meaning palace USSR of peace.")

(This letter is printed as we received it; the VVAW National Office responded but there has not been time, as of our publication date, to get a reply. If you have special experience in the field of post traumatic stress, we invite you to respond to this letter by writing them directly.)

Homeless

Rick Tingling-Clemmons
Washington DC VVAW

(The following is a copy of a letter sent by VVAW's Washington DC coordinator to Jack Kemp, Secretary of Housing. Rick Tingling-Clemmons has been involved in the issue of housing and the homeless for a number of years.)

Dear Secretary Kemp:

I write to you to express my concern that your office had denied the Board of Directors of the National Tenant Organization (NTO) an appointment to meet with you. NTO is an organization with a substantial interest and important role in your work developing a viable, effective housing policy and program for our nation.

Earlier this year, an NTO position paper criticzed racist policies of the federal government, relecting NTO conviction (based on the extensive experience of its members) that current housing policies have racist effects, borne out by continuing patterns of racial discrimination. Yet, I have been given the understanding that your office has accused the NTO Board of attacking you and the Presidnet, and is demanding a written apology from NTO as a precondition for scheduling the requested meeting. A criticism of unjust federal policy based on the very real and painful experience

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In The Philippines

U.S. Bases Serve U.S

John M. Miller
Stephen R. Shalom

U.S. jet fighters took to the skies of Manila as the superpower summiteers in Malta were discussing how to reduce military forces in Europe. Troop withdrawals from the Philippines, however, are the last thing on the Pentagon's mind. Even while the fighting raged in Manila, ABC's Pentagon correspondent reported that U.S. air assistance to the Aquino government would strengthen Washington's position in maintaining access to its huge military facilities in the Philippines, Clark Air Field and Subic Naval Base, but the U.S. role may backfire. Overt U.S. intervention has already inflamed nationalist sentiment.

Notwithstanding Bush's self-serving assertions that he had acted to preserve democracy, the U.S. moves to prop up President Corazon Aquino against the latest coup attempt had little to do with devotion to democracy and everything to do with supporting whichever side the U.S. believes is best able to promote its interests.

Over the years, the Pentagon has used its Philippine bases for projecting U.S. military power from Vietnam to the Persian Gulf. In order to secure these bases, the U.S. has consistently intervened in Philippine politics. In the mid-50's, for example, Washington undertook covert operations against Claro M. Recto, a prominent opponent of the bases, going so far as to prepare a vial of poison to administer to him. By the late 60's, the call for removal of the bases had been picked up by a mass movement, and when Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in 1972 to crush this movement, he had the full backing of the U.S. As one U.S. official noted, it was better to deal with Marcos on the bases than with a nationalist Congress.

The agreement allowing the U.S. bases in the Philippines expires in 1991, and the U.S. effort to convince Filipinos to allow the bases to remain has been faltering. The always useful Soviet bogey lost much of its force when Gorbachev proposed that both superpowers withdraw their bases from Southeast Asia: with the new thinking in Soviet foreign policy, Filipinos were asking, as Senator Leticia Shahani put it, "Where's the threat?" Now, however, we can expect the U.S. to use the December events to try to justify the renewal of the bases agreement.

U.S. officials hope that their aid to Aquino during the coup attempt will clinch her backing for the U.S. bases and, more importantly, since Aquino's support for the bases has been quite probable for some time now, convince those who reject military dictatorship that U.S. bases are necessary to preserve civilian rule. But the U.S. commitment to Philippine democracy does not run very deep.

Throughout the Marcos years, the U.S. supported the dictator because he supported the U.S. bases. In the days just before Marcos fell, President Reagan, asked which was more important, the bases or Philippine democracy, replied that "One cannot minimize the importance of those bases." The U.S. government's last minute switch to Aquino came after policymakers concluded that Marcos's corruption and repression were fueling the radical left and only a Philippine government with some legitimacy could maintain stability and thus preserve the U.S. bases.

In the face of numerous coup attempts, the Aquino government has moved decisively to the right, adopting the political program of the armed forces and Washington as her own--purging the few progressives from her cabinet, maintaining and expanding vigilante forces, and taking a hard-line on the communist insurgency. Although the U.S. did not want the many early coups to succeed, it took full advantage of them to enhance its leverage on the Philippine government. The most recent coup attempt follows the same pattern.

U.S. support for Aquino has nothing to do with any commitment to the principles of the People's Power revolution: Aquino has betrayed these long ago. Nor is U.S. backing for Aquino based on any commitment to democracy: the political system in the Philippines today is a system of elite, not popular rule. In any event, Washington has backed dictatorship in the Philippines and elsewhere whenever that was thought to further U.S. interests.

While once the Philippine armed forces had accepted civilian supremacy, after 14 years of martial law they take for granted their right to rule. Moreover, the Philippine military has also grown accustomed to fighting other Filipinos; U.S. military advisers routinely accompany Philippine troops on counter-insurgency operations. And the U.S. endorsed a substantial role for the military in the new Aquino administration.

But, direct military rule in the Philippines is unlikely to further U.S. interests at this time. Aquino, despite her growing unpopularity at home, is still well-liked in the U.S.; public opinion would demand and U.S. law require an immediate cutoff of aid to any regime installed by a coup d'etat, jeopardizing the Philippine counter-insurgency campaign.

If the U.S. supports "Philippine democracy" today, tomorrow, when, for example, the duly elected Senate refuses to ratify a new bases agreement, the U.S. may well decide to back the next Ferdinand Marcos. Of course, the U.S. may be able to get what it wants simply by economic blackmail and CIA operations. In either case, democracy will suffer.

If there is to be real democarcy in the Philippines, its government will have to become, at long last, responsive to the wishes and needs of the Philippine population. At present, the government can ignore the desperate plight of the majority of the people because it is dependent not on their support, but on the support of the military and the U.S. This sort of dependence can never yield democracy.

[Stephen Shalom is coordinator of the Campaign Against U.S. Military Bases in the Philippines; John Miller is Director of Foreign Bases Project.]

Movie Review:
A Rustling of Leaves: Inside the Philippine Revolution

Rustling of Leaves is outstanding. It is about political upheaval in the Philippines today. Director Nettie Wild takes the viewer from the barrios of Manilla complete with incredible smokey scenes of poverty and toil to the cool jungle holds of the New Peoples Army and along the way introduces you to the Anti-Communist Crusade, vigilaties from the notorious Alsa Masa and Tad Tad, and acquaints you with above ground left-wing politicians caught up in a desperate struggle for power.

Wild clearly attacks the "dirty little war" and takes a stand against Cory Acquino, the Anti-Communist Crusade and the role of the U.S. What is novel here is Wild's ability to portray the complexity of such conflicts and show low-intensity warfare on screen!

Voice of the Anti-Communist Crusade Dee-Jay, Jun Pala explains to the camera how Hitler--especially Goebel--had some pretty good ideas about propaganda, how and why he stands with the Alsa Masa.

Wild interviews Alsa Masa members in their strongholds (which are considerable) and she succeeds in baring some of the hideous tactics of vigilante repression. The viewer appreciates how Alsa Masa is tolerated by the government during a visit by Acquino who lauds the birthplace of Alsa Masa and applauds their work.

Wild also takes you with the left rebels into their home in the southern regions of the Philippines and it is this leg of the viewers' journey that pulls abstract impressions apart and serves up heaping reality because Wild never leaves the rebels behind. The viewer continually feels the push-pull of the guerrilla movement even when we accompany BAYAN (above ground left-wing) politicians back to Manilla after their campaign where we turn and meet "sparrows"--the urban rebels.

Wild probes questions within the left movement as well and some controversy has surrounded the film on the particular point of the trial and execution of a young NPA guerilla who gave information to Alsa Masa. But I, for one, appreciate Wild's dedication to presenting the world as it is, having grown tired of disinformation campaigns tolerated and promoted by the mainstream media.

Highly recommended, *Rustling of Leaves* is premiering in many large cities this summer. Watch for it and take your friends.

KUMANDER DANTE, Founder of the New People's Army, runs for Senate
FATHER NAVARO, Rebel priest and guerrilla fighter
RADIO DEEJAY, JUN PALA, Voice of the Anit-Communist Crusade & right wing death squads

A Rustling of Leaves:

Inside the Philippine Revolution

Meet Director, Nettie Wild, at the Chicago Premiere Benefit Performance

Wednesday
June 13
7:00 & 9:30
Chicago Filmmakers
1229 W Belmont

Proceeds will go to the Alliance for Philippine Concerns, Insight Images & will help pay the production costs of the film.

Call 281-8788 for more info about the premiere performance and four day run of this film.

PHILIPPINE PHOENIX AND COINTELPRO

TOP SECRET ARMY DOCUMENT REVEALED

By way of explanation

COINTELPRO PSYOPS & JERICHO

Dear Concerned Individual:

Enclosed is an extremely educational document. It is about the relationship between the current government of the Philippines, the people of the Philippines and the U.S. government. Operations Plan JERICHO is the mandate for a ptogram of community counter-intelligence (COINTELPRO) and psychological operations (PSYOPS).

For those of us in Vietnam Veterans Against the War, the document is a double reminder. These are the kinds of programs which many of us carried out during the Vietnam War. As most now know, these programs were targeted on Americans who op[posed the war as well as the Vietnamese people. Ironically, we in VVAW also experienced these operations as targets.

The complicity of the U.S. government is not just evident in the format and language of the program. The Chief, JUSMAG (Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group), is listed as a recipient of the distribution on the final page of the document;. Amid reports in the Philippines that the CIA and other U.S. elements were invlved in the most recent right-wing coup attempt, the existence of this covert political offensive is particularly disturning.

who conduct this kind of warfare are required to view truth as a something that must be distorted or, in the words of this document, "an image problem." Political reality becomes a matter of "social engineering." Human beings with dissident opinions are "the tumor" that must be removed with "an invisible surgical knife." Such surgical knives are the stuff of the former PHOENIX (PHUNG HOANG) Program in Vietnam and the death squads of the U.S. "allies" around the world.

We know how personally and politically destructive such "human intelligence" (HUMINT) operations can be for the targets and how morally corrupting for the protagonists. Those

G. David Curry, PhD
Former Captain
U.S. Army Vietnam

Joe Miller
Former Naval Intelligence
Vietnam/Pacific Region

Pat McCann
Former Air Force Intelligence

Bill Branson
Former Army Security Agency
Panama/Vietnam

Barry Romo
Former First Lt.
U.S. Army Vietnam

ARMED
CAMP

SUBJECT: OPLAN JERI
TO : See Distri

1. REFERENCES:

a. Letter of
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Computerized Death Squads

Phoenix

The Phoenix program, at once controversial and, at the same time, little known by the bulk of the American people, was an anti-insurgency program initiated by William Colby, Deputy Director of the CIA in 1966.

As it was conceived, Phoenix was designed to centralize, under CIA management, the various Saigon intelligence services responsible for seeking out National Liberation Front (Viet-Cong) agents in the civilian population. A tangle of military police and civilian officials were trained and guided by U.S. Army advisors (from the Special Forces) to penetrate the civilian population, gather information and arrest or "neutralize" suspected communist cadre.

By 1969 the CIA mission in Saigon listed 19,534 Viet Cong suspects as "neutralized."

As more information concerning the Phoenix program came to light, there followed an outcry by the American people and by anti-war Congressional representatives who referred to the program as "mass murder." CIA officials admitted to inefficiency, corruption and abuse in the operation. Further investigation showed Saigon officials functioning as usual: self-promotion, non-cooperation and massive graft of U.S. aid appropriations headed for the Phoenix program--in short, business as usual, only worse. Widespread reports show a high percentage of suspects were able to bribe their way to freedom. Still, the human toll was a horror.

Phoenix empowered village officials to fill quotas of enemy dead on a monthly basis. Needless to say, anyone killed was listed as an "enemy agent," similar to documentation used by the U.S. military throughout Vietnam. Large numbers of peasants were rounded up, released if they could pay bribes, tortured (if they couldn't pay bribes) and then executed on little or no chjarges. Corrupt village officials operating from personal vendettas, if nothing more, could easily meet their quotas and more.

U.S. military involvement varied from zealous support to outright horror at the program. U.S. Special Forces advisor teams became triggermen for Phoenix. In November of 1969, Colonel Robert Rheault and his Special Forces team were charged with the summary execution of a suspected Viet Cong spy or "termination with extreme prejudice," in the official language. Recapping his tour in one district in Vietnam, LTC Stuart Herrington stated, "No single endeavor caused more grief or frustration" for American advisors in Vietnam.

When the program finally died in the early 1970's, William Colby, the CIA man who ran Phoenix, stated that "despite its flaws and excesses, Phoenix eliminated some sixty thousand authentic Viet Cong agents."

After the war, Vietnamses officials called the program "extremely destructive," and "a devious and cruel operation that cost the loss of thousands of our people." International peace and human rights organizations placed the toll of the Phoenix program at between 75,000 and 90,000 victims, the majority of them being peasants who couldn't buy they way off Colby's computer death list.

Bill Davis
National Coordinator
VVAW

TOP SECRET

CHIEF OF STAFF
FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
GENERAL EMILIO AGUINALDO
QUEZON CITY

5 JANUARY 1989

ICHO
ibution

Instruction 5/86 (Mamamayan)
the Chief of Staff Authorizing Special
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Classified Report: Survey Results, Analysis
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Classified Report: Contemporary Behavioral
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Classified Report: Developments and
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E SITUATION

PLANS have already dented CPP/NPA/NDF
y. Captured documents show they now have

TOP SECRET

roblem. However, they remain resilient.
n able to exploit various socio-economic
many localities, they have somehow main-
ir popular support owing to SYP agitprop
gullible populace. In many cases still,
ble to counter AFP info drives and psyops.

aking good and sophisticated psyops are
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assured. Tactical military operations to
isolate the CTs from the populace are costly
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ld, impossible to accomplish in the urban
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g, closely coordinated, and geared to actual
nd counter-plans. What is needed is more
and sophisticated psyops, an invisible
nife that shall separate the tumor from the
ss.

f multi-media projection has been checked.
e. The difficulty lies in checking CT
iding behind socio-economic issues and legal
ecial psyops should be able to create the
ere these agitprop will not subsist.

ntelligence estimates and findings, CT
lan this year will maneuver around ceasefire
erican bases. New special psyops should be
employed vis-a-vis the plan and should
ssons for future use.

3. MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

a. MISSION

i. Back up OPLAN SUNSET and OPLAN IVORY
ii. Undercut CT peace initiative
iii. Preempt CT anti-bases bid
iv. Take steps to improve on psyops credibility

COMPONENTS

i. Update OPLAN SUNSET and OPLAN IVORY to factional struggles between CC moderates and hardliners. Make maximum use of DPA materials to isolate the hardliners and destroy the credibility of the entire leadership. Inspire and spread intrigues within their ranks.

ii. Conduct SMOs against select CT OB targets, open and underground, and blame these as offshoot of factional rivalries.

iii. Neutralize CPP's urban political infrastructure, especially MRRPC, NOC and NFC and their legal fronts.

iv. Continue publicizing CT atrocities, bloody purges and killing fields.

v. Find other uses of captured CT documents and prominent ex-CTs.

vi. Pursue OPLAN SUNSET to ABB and CT urban support network.

TOP SECRET

c TIMETABLE AND PHASES OF IMPLEMENTATION

OPLAN JERICHO shall commence implementation as soon as the TASK FORCE GROUP and other special bodies created for this mission have submitted their Implementation Plans (IMPLANS) to the coordinating center not later than 31 January 1989, the start-up of sliding schedule up to 31 December 1989

OPLAN JERICHO shall be implemented in three phases:

i. first phase : psyops build-up from 1 February to 30 April
ii. second phase: psyops offensive with SMO from 1 May to 31 August
iii. third phase : psyops mopping up with SMO from 1 September to 31 December

4. MANNER OF IMPLEMETATION

a. The TASK FORCE GROUP to be known as TFG-JERICHO shall be organized with the AFP Deputy Chief of Staff as CG and Chiefs of ISAFP, PSC, CRS, NCRDC and CSC as members.

b. TFG-JERICHO CC shall be responsible for coordinating with other participating units previously screened and selected for this mission.

c. All orders shall be relayed through the command structure agreed upon for this mission.

s/t RENATO DE VILLA
General, AFP

DISTRIBUTION:

Chief, TFG-JERICHO
Chiefs, participating units
Spokesman, AFP
Chief, JUSMAG

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TOP SECRET

2

The Philippine View

Bases Equal Imperialism

From Liberation

Everything had been set in March. Malacanang had announced that Cory Aquino would be leaving for Paris in July, then for Moscow later in the year. All of a sudden, in mid-April, the Palance announced that Aquino was cancelling her date with the Soviets. Instead, she was going to the U.S. before the year's end.

A week later Aquino herself confirmed speculations about the reason for the sudden change of plans. In an interview with news reporters, she said: "Yes, I think it is safe to assume that by the end of the year, talks (about the U.S. military bases' future) will be started."

The two sudden announcements made clear that the U.S. intended to exact a commitment from Aquino to allow the U.S. military bases to stay in the Philippines beyond 1991. By agreeing to go to Washington, Aquino showed that she was not averse to making such a commitment.

Aquino's trip to the U.S. gave lie to her "open options" policy on the bases. For its part, the U.S. government openly battled for early negotiations to extend the treaty. Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus has admitted that even during the 1988 review of the Military Bases Agreement (MBA), the U.S. had been pressuring the Philippine government into setting an early date for renegotiating a new treaty.

As happened in the 1988 talks between Manglapus and U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz, the 1989 negotiations again were held in secrecy in Washington, away from the scrutiny of the Filipino people.

Aquino has repeatedly said that the intrest and welfare of the Filipino people would be the "paramount" consideration in any governmetn decision on the bases. And yet, Aquino, since coming to power, has never made a categorical position against the continued presence of the U.S. bases. This, despite the fact that the bases are indeed, anathema to Philippine interest.

Nationalists and other progressive elements have time and again explained why the bases should go: The mere presence of the bases proves that the U.S. government could ram anything they want down our throats. At the same time, the bases provide the U.S. with the military clout to ensure this.

Clark and Subic [U.S. Air Force and Naval bases] are more than just remnants of our painful colonial past. They are actually guns, bombs, warheads and nuclear missiles aimed at the Filipino people and all other peoples of the Asia-Pacific region. These weapons of death are ready to be fired the moment Washington decides on a policy of direct intervention or aggression against any country in the region.

For all Philippine governments since 1946, the bases have been a prime factor in decision-making. The presence of the bases of Philippine soil is an indication that the coutnry does not enjoy genuine freedom, independence and sovereignty.

Through the untiring efforts of anti-bases activists, an increasing number of Filipinos are realizing the negative implications of the bases' continued stay. Even conservatives at the Ateneo de Manila have released the results of a survey conducted early this year showing that since August 1988, the number of Filipinos who are in favor of an indefinited retetion of the bases beyond 1991 has dropped from 58% to 40%.

Apart from the survey, the nationalist fervor that went with the anti-Marcos distatorship struggle in the last decade has made it more and more untenable for the U.S. government and its local puppets like Aquino to "rule in the old way." This explains shy Aquino has taken an "open options" policy on the bases, instead of categorically stating that she is for their retention.

In fact, both Manglapus and Aquino have been forced to take a very cautious approach to the issue. "The talks (this eyar) would be exploratory and would determine whether it would be worthwhile to enter into any formal negotiation," Manglapus has been quoted as saying. Aquino, for her part, simply skirts the issue: "We do not know how these talks would finally end up," she has said. "Maybe it could end up in a new agreement and then the treaty wuill have to be ratified by the Senate. But what I have announced so far is that we will talk and we will see how these talks will finally end."

In truth, a decision from the Philippine government at least one year prior to the MBA's termination in September 1991 is sufficient to determine the fate of the bases. If Aquino were really intent on ending the bases treaty in the interest of national sovereignty, there would be no need for further talks.

One actor that is expected to play a key role in deciding the fate of the bases is the Senate, whose approval is needed to ratify any international treaty entered into by Aquino. From all indications, Aquino will likely evade final responsibility for the bases and toss the issue to the Senate, the same way she left Congress to make the difficult decisions on the land reform law.

There is a lot of hope among the people that the Senate would not ratify a pro-bases treaty. After all, the 23-member chamber has passed the antinuclear bill which bans the entry of nuclear weapons in Philippine territory including U.S. bases.

However, with only two senators--Wigberto Tanada and Joseph Estrada--declaring an uncompromising position against the bases, pinning one's hopes on the Senate would seem foolhardy.

Sens. Butz Aquino and Leticia Shahani, on the other hand, have taken positions as dubious and the President's "open options." The bases will have to go, they say--but not too soon. It is the same line espoused by the rightist Defense Secretary Fidel Ramos. Critics of this position point out, however, that the government could adopt a policy of gradually phasing out the bases without the necessity of having a new treaty ratified.

Others have espoused the more blatantly dubious position taken by Vice President Salvdor Laurel and other former pro-Marcos politicians in the Nacionalista Party(NP): They want to call a referendum to "let the people decide" the fate of the bases. Marcos' former defense secretary Juan Ponce Enrile, a key figure in the NP, has made political capital out of Aquino's wishy-washy position, saying that his was nothing but a "face-saving act." But even he has never worked to dismantle the bases in the two decades that he was in a position to do so.

As for the suggstion to call a referendum, Filipinos experience with elections shows that referenda results could always be rigged. With all the resources at the command of the Aquino government and the U.S. , it would also be wishful thinkint to expect that they would not launch a massive, systematic propaganda drive in favor of the bases to wing the votes of the largely uninformed and unpoliticized millions.

The National Democratic Front has taken the uncompromising position that no foreign military bases must be allowed on Philippine soil at any time. It is also willing to declare a unilateral ceasefire if Aquino makes a categorical declaration that the bases treaty would not be renewed, opening the way for talks towards a peaceful settlement of the 20-year-old civil war.

For the revolutionary forces, the removal of the U.S. bases is a prerequisite to lasting peace in the Philippines. The bases are also key obstructions to the real economic recovery desired by our people; such a recovery could be possible only if the bases no longer stand in the way of our country's assertions of political and economic sovereignty.

But Aquino has chosen to ignore the NDF's peace overtures and to go to Washington instead. The pretext is that she would lobby for more foreign investments and support for the $10 billion Philippine Aid Plan other known as the Multilateral Aid Intiative (MAI). In reality, the mainly U.S. sponsored MAI is a form of economic blackmail on the Aquino government, which is in desperate financial straits. U.S. Senator Richard Lugar, one of the principal authors of the MAI, has gone on record saying that "the MAI has security implications for the U.S. Last October," he said, "we signed a two-year base review agreement providing for short-term stability in our security ties and additional resources to the Philippines. Progress in the MAI will build on this agreement." (Italics added)

With Aquino's obsequiousness to U.S. imperialism already reaching disgusting proportions, a decision in favor of the bases' retention is a forefone conclusion. So confident is U.S. imperialism about the inevitable extension of the MBA that when U.S. ambassador Nicholas Platt was asked in a recent interview with Clark Air Base's Far East Network, what he thought about the coming negotiations, he took a deep breath, smiled, and said: "We've always succeeded before and that gives me confidence we will succeed again." Such smugness, no doubt, derives from U.S. imperialism's firm hold on this government's purse strigns and on its puppet Cory Aquino.

[This article, written over the name of Pen Gurrera, appeared in the May/June 1989 issue of LIBERATION, a publication of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

Interview with Leader of Patriotic Union

On Colombia

most recent was the Anti-Drug Summit in Cartagena de las Indias, Colombia, a few months ago. Was anything accomplished?

Montana: Something important was happening in Cartagena. Not for Bush--he was just there to campaign for himself. But Barco, Alan Garcia [of Peru] and Zamora [Bolivia] were very together on a number of important points. For one, they agreed that the problem of drug production can't be resolved without substituting an alternative crop.

The production of coca, as opposed to refined cocaine, is ancient in Peru and Bolivia. Chewing the coca leaf wards off hunger and altitude sickness. This is how people could walk long distances in the times of the Incas. It's an old custom.

For the people native to these regions, it used to be that there was corn growing next to the coca leaf. But there wasn't much of an external market. Now along come some Americans in planes and the people have a some of money. This is the first time they've really had enough to eat, to live decently. That's why, if we are going to take away the cocaine, we need a profitable replacement. We need to invest in land research and infrastructure reform, so we can develop and plant other products.

Generally, the Third World needs a new world economic order. The United Nations agreed on that in 1974. But it has not been fulfilled in reality. Take for example, foreign debt: development based on dependence equals foreign debt. Look at a rich country like Brazil. Look at a technologically developed country like Argentina. All have the same "drainage" problem.

The non-payment of the foreign debt is the beginning of the movement toward independence--which is what Latin America needs. The structure of the loans has systematically forced the countries of Latin America to export our capital for the development of the highly developed countries! In the last ten years Latin American countries sent out more than double the loans they had received. It's not ethical.

The continued paying of debt will hold back the social development of the Latin American peoples. The non-payment of the debt is central to the economic, political and social integration of Latin America.

Q: If Americans could do anything to help, what would it be?

Montana: U.S. public opinion is very important. A large part of the ruling class listens to the dominant opinion in the U.S. It is imperative that the American people understand that we are more than an appendage of the U.S.

We would ask that you help prevent the U.S. shipment of the chemicals that are used to process drugs to Colombia. This would prevent the processing of drugs in Colombia. We would ask that the U.S. government please patrol and control its own coast instead of worrying about the departure of drugs from Colombia. The attempt to dominate our coastal waters is not acceptable to us. We need you to understand that the military aid to Colombia is simply not to hunt drug traffickers. They are not being used to hunt Escobar [of the Medellin Cartel]. The attack helicopters are being used to attack our peasant movements.

What is most important is that the U.S. people see that the drug problem is determined mostly by consumption. Drug addiction is a product of U.S. society of the advanced capitalist consumer society. The struggle against this aspect of the drug business cannot be resolved in Colombia. I know that here in the U.S. the drug situation weighs heavily on the poor. That struggle is as much in the interests of the Colombians as it the people of the U.S.

Q: And what will happen now in Colombia?

Montana: Colombia is one of the oldest democracies in Latin American. In Colombia the President and Congress are elected. There is a separation of powers and freedom of the press. Why is it that with so much "democracy" the popular majority is not in power? Because the formal "democracy" is a lie. This is reflected in the fact that of 17 million voters, only 4 million--therefore a minority--elects the power structure.

We feel that there is a political solution to our problems. Peace is a necessity for the Colombian people. We must broaden our movement. We must go beyond the left and all the democratic sectors must work together. When I return to Colombia I will attend a convention that will initiate a call for all the left and democratic forces to come together for peace and democracy. We will not have a candidate in the May 25 presidential elections [the UP's presidential candidate was assassinated March 22] but will support a plebiscite that will call for a constitutional assembly made up of political parties and social forces. The coalition that is forming now will call for housing reform, urban and rural reform and a human rights policy.

The Colombian struggle is for democracy--as is the case with Nicaragua, El Salvador, Cuba and elsewhere. Justice in Colombia has been destroyed. We will reconstruct it. We are determined to have a home with justice.

Q: What does the U.S. think of your plan for a political convention?

Montana: They do not like the plan. Even though they don't say it, they are very interested in maintaining things as they are. They still manipulate the government through the army.

-- 30 --

The day after this interview Carlos Pizarro, the presidential candidate of the April 19th Movement (M-19) was assassinated on an airplane in Colombia in spite of the 14 body guards who accompanied him on the plane. M-19 had recently turned in their weapons and agreed to participate in the democratic process. Montana returned to Colombia amid heavy security.

The convention of which he spoke was held and resulted in the formation of the Democratic Alliance and was attended by 267 groups including the Patriotic Union, the Popular Front, M-19, the Trade Union Confederation (CUT), the peasant unions, intellectuals, regional and civic movements, religious leaders and individual members of other groups including In Struggle, the Communist Party, the Social Conservative party, and the Liberal Party. Diego Montana was elected one of the top leaders of the Democratic Alliance. The plebiscite will be on the May 25 ballot.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Letters

of the victims of that policy should not be construed as a personal insult to the President under any reasonable circumstances.

It would appear that there is a clear breakdown in communication resulting from overreaction and misunderstanding. The only reasonable course for resolving misunderstanding is dialogue, not denial. As a Vietnam veteran, I have seen firsthand the excessive costs--in lives and resources--that can result from not talking with those you disagree with. Denial of tenants' rights to due process and dealing with drug problems--in America in general, in public housing in particular--is certainly worth talking about. The stakes are too high to allow the personal discomfort experienced by Mr. Albright when confronted by the justifiable anger and frustration of public housing residents determine your willingness to dialogue with NTO representatives. VVAW is an affiliate of NTO, and our members also suffer from housing discrimination. Our commitment to the betterment of our nation is a fact proven with our blood, sweat and tears--and too often, the lives of our comrades. We urge you to unite with our efforts to improve the housing conditions for all in our country.

Our nation's housing is in crisis, and could only benefit from open and productive communication between you, the nation's highest ranking housing official and one of the country's largest housing advocacy groups--and of a constituency far too often unrepresented in such dialogues.

The NTO Board and membership share with you a dedication and commitment to effecting a better, more equitable housing policy for our nation's citizens. I appeal to you to open dialogue with NTO by contacting Maxine Gree, Chairperson, and inviting her and the NTO Board to meet with you, so that we can join forces to create a stronger national consensus on housing policy. Our nation's public housing residents certainly deserve no less.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

'Nam Vet Political Prisoner

Pratt

Geronimo's innocence.

Geronimo Pratt has served 20 years (including 8 years of solitary confinement in the hole--a 5 by 6 foot cell) for a crime he did not commit. His real crime is being a freedom fighter. Our struggle cannot afford to abandon him. In 1981, Amnesty International recognized Pratt as a political prisoner. There is a continuing resolution in Congress, introduced by Ron Dellums (D-CA) to conduct hearings on Geronimo. But it is up to us to produce the groundswell of public outrage to demand justice for Geronimo Pratt!

For More Information, write:
Justice for Geronimo Campaign
214 Duboce Ave
San Francisco, CA 94103

THEY'RE BACK!!

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VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

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Eyewitness Report From Panama

Operation Just Cause

Lamoin Werlein-Jaen

On December 20, 1989 the people of Panama were subject to the most violent act of aggression in our entire national history. While **perestroika** swept Eastern Europe, the U.S. military swept Panama. As they had in 1918, 1925, 1958 and 1964, the U.S. government once again resorted to military force in order to protect their interests in Panama. Within a weeks time the entire country from the Darien province on the Columbian border to the Chirisi province on the western frontier had come under the control of U.S. occupation forces. Nothing in Panama's past could have prepared people for the sheer magnitude of the violence unleashed beginning on December 20th and it will no doubt take several years to overcome the devastation.

Behind these events was a country facing deep political divisions and prolonged economic crisis. Through the 1980's economic instability helped generate widespread dissatisfaction with the status quo among the general population. Between 1981 and 1987 four top-ranking military officials were removed from positions of power while four people occupied the post of President. If you made it for more than a year in the presidency, you were lucky.

Evidence of popular resentment included the violence surrounding the 1984 elections in which former World Bank VP, Ardito Barletta was fradulently imposed as President. But, with all the violent confrontations which surrounded Panamanian politics, there was a qualitative change in 1988 when the U.S. came up with its own "project" to resolve the crisis of Panama. That was when the U.S. government decided that the Noriega-led regime posed a threat to "vital" U.S. interests on the Isthmus. After that, the dominant feature of the crisis in Panama was the conflict between the U.S. government and the ruling alliance in Panama. Events deteriorated rapidly as the U.S. launched a low-intensity offensive which included a propaganda campaign against Noriega (to make it seem like he was the issue), economic sanctions and military intimidation.

The most important effect of U.S. intervention was the devastation of the Panamanian economy, the result of a loss of investor confidence, the effects of U.S. economic sanctions, successive waves of looting and rioting, and finally, the destruction associated with the U.S. invasion.

For the people of Panama the effects have been horrendous: the output of goods and services have declined more than 25%. The official unemployment rate grew from 11% in 1987 to 18% in 1989. More reliable figures place the unemployment rate at 25% at the beginning of 1989, while it was also estimated that over 40% of all Panamanian families lived under the government defined "poverty line." Basic social services deteriorated.

The aggression launched against the Republic of Panama was quite literally an invasion, a large scale offensive against Panamanian armed forces, the destruction of the Panamanian government and the occupation of our ENTIRE national territory. And, sadly, it was a victory for the aggressor. We now live under occupation and a government directed by Generals Maxwell Thurman and Marc Cisneros of the U.S. Southern Command.

U.S. invasion forces were made up of 27,000 men and women both from the U.S. mainland and those already stationed in Panama. Twelve thousand troops were airlifted to Panama as part of the invasion to join 13,000 stationed there; two thousand more were airlifted in on December 23rd to help "mop up" in the Capitol. Mainland forces included elements of the 82nd Airborne (from Ft Bragg, NC), the 5th Infantry Division (Ft Polk, LA0, the

Photo by Mary Martin

7th Light Infantry (Ft Ord, CA) and rangers from several bases including Ft Benning, GA.

In the course of the fighting these forces used the most sophisticated hardware available. The F-117A "Stealth" fighter was used in the attack of Rio Hato, while the AH-64 "Apache" assault helicopter was intrumental in the fighting at the Colon and CocSolo (on the Atlantic side) and in the assault on the capital. These helicopters, armed with two 30mm cannons and so-called "Hellfire" missiles gave the U.S. substantial advantage over the Panamanian ground forces.

U.S. forces were largely successful in their strategy of "breaking the structure of the PDF"--the Panamanian Defense Forces. Within the first hours of the invasion every major PDF installation in the Capital and in the Atlantic port area of Colon was destroyed by combined air and land assaults, and in some cases, by Marine landings. PDF forces not killed or captured in the initial attacks dispersed into small guerilla bands and linked up with the resistence led by the Dignity Battalions (volunteer units, essentially a militia). These forces were able to resist the invasion forces for some three or four days before being either killed or captured or going underground in a tactical retreat. It is widely believed that intact elements from the "Machos del Monte" Battallion fled into the hills of the Cocle Province, while elements from the "Battallion 2000" retreated into the mountains of Cerro Azul northeast of Panama City. In the interior of the republic several PDF installations surrendered after being threatened with annihilation by approaching U.S. forces.

According to offical figures, 23 U.S. servicemen died in the fighting with another 300 injured. However, there have been persistent rumors from both Panama and the U.S. estimating that many more--perhaps as many as 100--died during the invasion. Once again the country needs to ask itself, What did these individuals die for? To restore democracy? To protect "American" lives? Haven't we heard all this before? Isn't this just the same old shit?

The invasion has devastated the nation; the social cost was high. Reliable estimates put the civilian death toll at more than 2000; more are classified as "missing." Additionally, several hundred from the PDF, Dignity Battalions and other nationalist forces died fighting to defend their country against foreign aggression. Many of these people were not even given decent burial but thrown into mass graves of a hundred or more. Some 20,000 people are homeless, many of these having lost all their personal belongings. The economic costs have been staggering with damages to infrastructure and property estimated at more than $2 billion. All told, the invasion killed thousands and emotionally scarred many more, reduced our economy to ashes and completely destroyed our state institutions.

Perhaps the most enduring effect of the invasion is that it will most likely insure the presence of the U.S. Southern Command in Panama beyond the year 2000. Panama remains a vitally important geo-strategic location which the U.S. seeks to further exploit and dominate. Chief among the reasons for the U.S. invasion was the perception that the Noriega-led government posed a threat to those interests and might not renegotiate the Canal treaties to allow bases to remain beyond the December 1999 withdrawal date. The U.S. felt it must establish a pro-imperialist regime which would sell out the nation, something which is now in place with the Endara government; a renegotiation of the Canal treaties will no doubt be soon forthcoming.

Imposition of a puppet regime has other implications for Panama's future. The new regime not only will sell-out the country; it will return the traditional oligarchy to power. An all out attack against even the most mildly progressive social institutions and government policies will be launched. In fact, the Endara-led government is composed of the most right-wing, pro-U.S. and "old-money" elements in Panamanian society. What this represents is a return to the racist policies of past "rabiblanco" oligarchal governments when, in order to make it into the higher echelons of power, one had to be from a "respectable" (read rich and white) family.

Predicting what may happen next in Panama is difficult; a lot more dust will have to settle before we can tell where the country is headed. There are some important problems, however.

The economic situation is grave and continues to deteriorate. Since the invasion it is estimated byat 50,000 people have been laid off from their jobs, pushing the unemployment rate to nearly 40%. Furthermore, the loss of homes has created an internal refugee problem the likes of which we have never seen. Add to this the general decay of the past several years during the U.S. economic boycott, and the hollow offers of U.S. aid (which, for some reason isn't arriving) and the future looks quite bad.

Within two weeks of the invasion there was the first labor mobilization and the first nationalist demonstration. Shortly thereafter a group of landless "squatters"--who had been violently removed from occupied lands--marched on the presidential palace to demand decent housing. On February 14, some 10,000 public employees marched through downtown Panama City denouncing the massive layoffs in the public sector of the economy. Two weeks later leaders of the public employees union FENASEP went on a hunger strike calling for a

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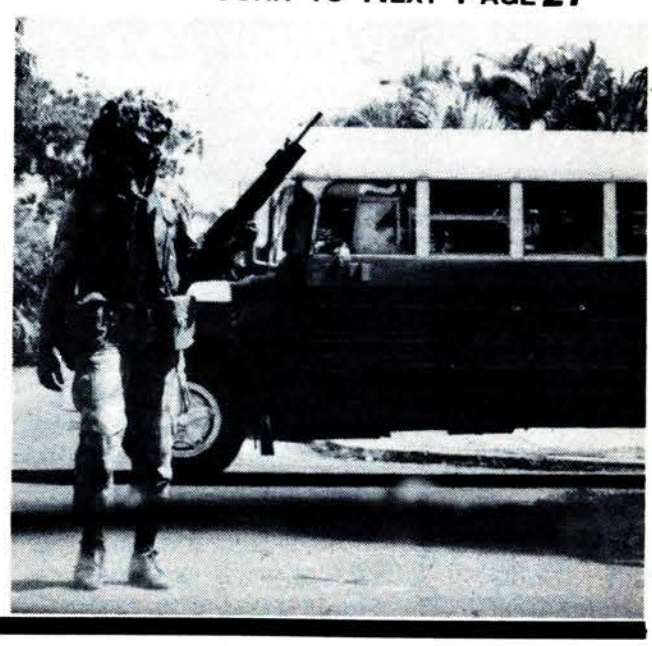


View From A Vet

Panama Invasion

Photo by Mary Martin

Section of Panama destroyed by U.S. forces.

Photo by Mary Martin

Pete Zastrow
VVAW National Office

Panama has almost disappeared from the nightly news. It requires serious searching to find an article in a weekly newsmagazine where Panama is mentioned. It's almost hard to remember that, not so many months ago, the U.S. military was mobilized to invade that country. Or that, for several years before that, Panama was high on the list of U.S. public enemies, somehow meriting a choking economic boycott where no U.S. concern could do business which contributed taxes to the government of Panama.

It is worthwhile to look at stripped-bare facts. The U.S. invaded Panama, an independent country. The U.S. used all the military power necessary to conquer this independent country. The U.S. took the head of government from his country, brought him to the U.S. and holds him as a prisoner of war in a U.S. prison. Neither the people nor the government of Panama had done anything to the U.S. to justify an invasion. After the invasion the U.S. installed a government of its own choosing to run the country.

If the Soviet Union dealt with Lithuania, or countries in Eastern Europe, in a similar fashion the U.S. government would be screeching to the skies about barbarism, godless communism, etc, etc.

General Noriega, alleged drug trafficker whose supposed crimes provided a major justification for the U.S. invasion has almost dropped from sight. It seems likely that he was extravagantly supported by the CIA which happily overlooked his activities; it is clear that he was extravangantly supported in his political career by the U.S. government until he refused to toe the U.S. line concerning Nicaragua. When that happened not only did Noriega abruptly become a most-wanted criminal, but his country became the target of a massive U.S. campaign of economic sanctions. When I was in Panama at the end of November, government officials told us that the Gross National Product had fallen by over 40% as a result of U.S. interference.

In retrospect, Noriega was never an important part of the U.S. invasion plan; he was merely a vital excuse for what the Bush Administration had decided to do. That's why we hear so little about Noriega now; the invasion is over, Bush did what he wanted to do. As far as the U.S. government is concerned, Noriega can rot in prison.

At the very end of the year 1999, by treaty the Panama Canal will become Panamanian. The U.S. will lose control over the Canal and over the Canal Zone; U.S. bases will no longer automatically be allowed on Panamanian territory. Before the treaty reaches that final stage, the U.S. government, and especially those heavily influenced by the right wing of the Republican Party, wants to be absolutely certain they are negotiating with a Panamanian government friendly to the U.S. and U.S. concerns.

With the U.S.- installed Endara government, the U.S. has moved much closer to the objective of a friendly (indeed, dependent) government. That Endara may well have been--and according to some sources may still be--as substantially involved in drugs as Noriega was supposed to have been is irrelevant to U.S. foreign policy. Of course, Noriega's supposed involvement was also irrelevant for a number of years. All indications are that the oligarchy--the Panamanian ruling class from years ago, those who profited from U.S. involvement--is back in power. The U.S. government is happy; the Panamanian government is happy; the Panamanian oligarchy is happy. The U.S. military is happy because they had a chance to try out some of their new techniques and hardware.

The families of the U.S. troops who died in Panama are probably not so happy. The families of the thousands of Panamanians who were killed in the invasion are not so happy. The tens of thousands of Panamanian homeless are not happy; neither are the people of Panama. Other governments in Central and South America, even those critically dependent on the support of the U.S. could find nothing good to say about the U.S. invasion. The long-time image of Uncle Sam as the Wall Street gangster is lost on no one in Central America.

What was learned from the invasion of Panama? Certainly the lesson was clear to governments in places like Nicaragua or Cuba, or to the opposition in places like El Salvador: the U.S. government, if it can't get its way, will send in troops. For the Bush Administration the lesson has to be that they can invade another country and get away with it, that the plusses, from their point of view, far outweigh the minuses. There is no reason to think they won't do the same thing again when it looks good to them.

For those of us who oppose U.S. aggression against other countries, we have to marvel at the scarcity of voices raised against this invasion. Public figures were almost uniformly silent, their disagreement cut short by the Bush Administration propaganda which made the invasion sound like part of the war against drugs (and we're all for that, of course) and like the defense of the American flag and motherhood (remember the officer's wife who, according to Bush, suffered "threats of abuse" from Panamanian guards who stopped the Americans in a place where they had no business).

We also have to wonder at the U.S. media which likes to portray itself as open and fair to say nothing of probing and intelligent. The media, as a whole, swallowed the Bush line without question. Pool reporters were taken around by the military in Panama, reported what they were allowed to see, and let the people believe they were getting the whole truth. There were such ridiculous stories as the pounds of "cocaine" found in Noriega's private quarters which later turned out to be makings for tortillas (of course the first item was headlines, the second item was buried under the obituaries on page 47 of the paper).

Perhaps the most serious failure, however, is the frame of mind which allows the Panamanian invasion to so quickly and quietly disappear from the papers or TV. Maybe it is a kind of national egotism which says that Panama is, after all, a sort of banana republic of no real importance; what the U.S. does there is just another act in the comic operetta which has been the story of the U.S. in Central America for a century. What happens there just isn't quite real, isn't quite important in the way that Eastern Europe is important. And there is a large dose of racism involved; in fact, the Endara government has installed an almost totally "white" government unlike the thoroughly integrated government of past Panamanian administrations.

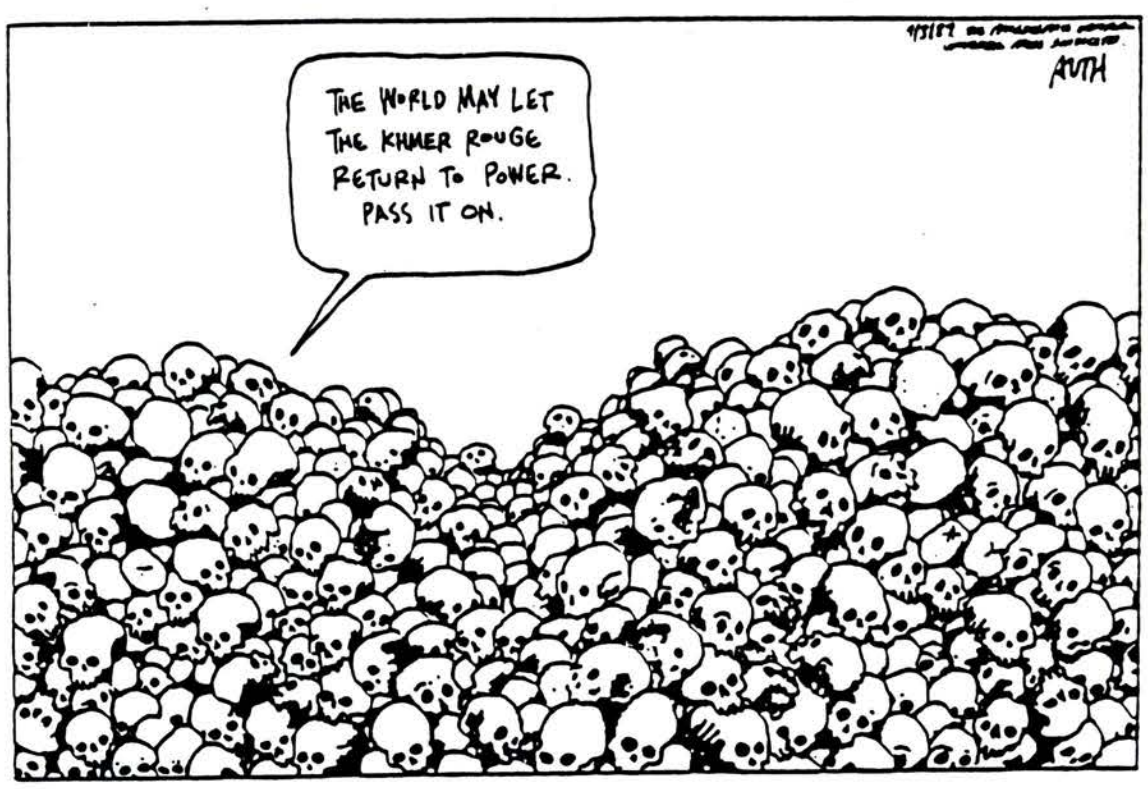
The bombs dropped in Panama were real bombs which blew apart real buildings full of real people who were killed. Families grieve over lost relatives. There is no comedy here: there is U.S. aggression--which continues--and which must stop.

VVAW Joins

Campaign to Oppose Return of Khmer Rouge

WE BELIEVE THAT THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND TO A FREE, NEUTRAL, AND INDEPENDENT CAMBODIA. THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE MUST DECIDE THEIR OWN FUTURE. HOWEVER, WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT AS A PERPETRATOR OF GENOCIDE AGAINST THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE, THE KHMER ROUGE HAS NO MORAL RIGHT TO A PLACE IN THE FUTURE OF CAMBODIA.

WE THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT SHOULD SUPPORT SETTLEMENT OF THE CAMBODIAN CRISIS BASED ON THE EXCLUSION OF THE KHMER ROUGE AS A POLITICAL/MILITARY ENTITY.



The memories are haunting. Piles of skulls; sightless eyes turned skyward; forced labor camps; a once-bountiful and beautiful country first destroyed by B-52 bombers and then ravaged in an effort to turn back history.

By the end of Pol Pot's 3-year reign in 1978, Cambodian had become a vast killing field. His fanatical Khmer Rouge tortured, shot, starved, or hacked to death more than one million Cambodian, a slaughter that was halted only by a Vietnamese invasion at the end of that year.

After its defeat the demoralized Khmer Rouge army stumbled into Thailand. It was at this point that Western and Asean countries, led by the United States and China, decided to rebuild the Khmer Rouge as a political and military force in order to prevent the stabilization of Cambodia's new government installed by the Vietnamese. Incredibly, the United Nations went along with this scheme, allowing its relief operations to feed and shelter the Khmer Rouge and even seating Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge (and later, the Khmer Rouge-led Coalition Government o Democratic Kampuchea) as the legitimate representative of Cambodia at the U.N.! These and other channels of aid, primarily from the U.S. Thailand and China, have succeeded in sustaining the tens of thousands of troops of the Khmer Rouge and its military allies. In the border camps in Thailand over 300,000 Cambodians live as virtual prisoners, denied refugee status elsewhere but unable to go home. Mainly thousands of them are forced to live in camps controlled by the Khmer Rouge and are often pressed into service by the Khmer Rouge army.

Now the United States government, with the full knowledge that the Khmer Rouge committed genocide against its own people, las proposed that they be invited to participate in a political solution to the civil war in Cambodia.

The Nazis were not invited to participate in a German "settlement" after the Second World War. They were not guaranteed a seat at the conference table, nor the right to participate in free and fair" elections. Why is our government insisting that the Khmer Rouge be included in a negotiated Cambodian settlement? Why did it first help create the Coalition grouping that they lead and then continue to supply this Khmer Rouge/Sihanouk/Son Sann Coalition with military, paramilitary, diplomatic support? The answer is that big-power geopolitical considerations of China and the U. S. have taken precedence over the neutrality, independence , welfare, and even lives of the Cambodian people.

It is time for U.S. Citizens to speak out again before Cambodia experiences another catastrophe. THE CAMPAIGN TO OPPOSE THE RETURN OF THE KHMER ROUGE needs your support now to reverse our government's policy toward Cambodia. Please join us!

WE NEED YOUR HELP! TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC BY: Building on existing information about the Khmer Rouge genocide; Informing opinion makers and other concerned citizens about the policies which have sustained the Khmer Rouge; Finding effective expression or latent citizen opposition to these policies; Mobilizing the Camapaign's existing networks to organize spring activities across the nation for a Week for Cambodia during the first week of May; Circulating the new video, Cambodia: Year Ten and other resources about Cambodia (speakers, movies, fact sheets, and other printed materials). TO ADVOCATE IN CONGRESS AND PRESSURE THE ADMINISTRATION, TO: Stimulate wider concern on Capitol Hill about U.S. policy toward Cambodia through identification land education of key Congresspeople; Activate concerned citizens to write and lobby these members, both generally and for specific legislation; Work with key people in Congress to introduce specific legislation (such as a bill to stop funding the civil war); Create timely pressure on the Administration through such legislation, as well as through petitions, visits by key citizens and Congresspeople, media, publicity, and other forms of public pressure; Mobilize the Cambodia Campaign's contacts throughout the country for letter writing and lobbying projects as needed. TO INFORM THE MEDIA, BY: Stimulating opinion makers when appropriate--and fostering the Campaign's local networks to maintain friendly contacts with local media--for the purpose of ensuring full and accurate national coverage of Cambodia issues; Lobbying for extensive showings on television stations of the British Television documentary, CAmbodia: Year Ten; Keeping the national media informed of the current situation in Cambodia through timely press releases, press conferences, and resource promotion, and through stimulation of editorials and op-eds by opinion makers.

BASED ON OUR STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES, THE CAMPAIGN TO OPPOSE RETURN OF THE KHMER ROUGE WILL SEEK THE FOLLOWING CHANGES IN UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT POLICY. WE URGE OUR GOVERNMENT TO: 1) Seek to exclude the "Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea" (CGDK)-- dominated by the Khmer Rouge-- from the United Nations and to leave Cambodia's seat empty pending a negotiated settlement and/or free and fair elections. 2) End United States diplomatic support and defacto recognition of this or any coalition which includes the Khmer Rouge. 3) Stop U.S. military aid, both lethal and non-lethal, to any Cambodia faction which insists on including the Khmer Rouge in a political settlement. 4) Support a ceasefire by all sides and call for an end to all military aid to all parties. 5) Prevent all U.S. humanitarian laid to the Thai-Cambodian border camps from any continued use as a political or military tool by the Khmer Rouge or allies. 6) Press the United Nations to provide all Cambodians in border camps with official refugee status, with proper United Nations protection, and with the free choice of relocating to a neutral site while awaiting the opportunity for safe repatriation or resettlement abroad. 7) Use U.S. diplomatic influence with China to urge termination of all Chinese aid to the Khmer Rouge. 8) Support Thailand's initiative for a zone of peace in Indochina and use U.S. influence with Thailand to end Thai collaboration with and support for the Khmer Rouge military effort in Cambodia. 9) Remove the current United States aid and trade embargoes on Cambodia sos that ungently needed relief, reconstruction and development assistance can reach the Cambodian people. 10) Encourage and support international efforts to bring to justice Pol Pot and the major Khmer Rouge leaders for the crime of genocide in keeping with obligations incumbent on the United States as a signator of the Genocide Convention.

Campaign to Oppose
Return of the Khmer Rouge
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Book Review: Vietnam Now

The Time is Now

Recognize Vietnam

Pete Zastrow
VVAW National Office

It's a strange experience to read Vietnam Now: A Case for Normalizing Relations with Hanoi by ex-Congressman and staunch conservative John LeBoutillier. His conclusion--that the U.S. should recognize Vietnam and normalize relations--is absolutely correct, but he's wrong on almost every premise in his argument for this change in U.S. policy.

Take the loud and continuing issue of "POW's" held in Vietnam fifteen years after the liberation of the country. LeBoutillier echoes the idea that since the Vietnamese deny having American prisoners, they are no doubt being hidden in Laos. According to the author, if the U.S. government were to recognize Vietnam and establish normal relations, all these POW's would be returned home, apparently in gratitude. POW's are being held, it follows, as a bargaining chip for someday/maybe/whoknows negotiations for normal relations.

How POW's can be a bargaining chip when the Vietnamese government denies their existence is not clear. In fact the many arguments concerning the existence of POW's in Vietnam flounder on the same point: how can the Vietnamese government say there are no POW's if they want to use these same imaginary POW's to force the U.S. to negotiate.

There are no POW's in Vietnam. It's possible there are American GIs who decided to stay in Vietnam although when a VVAW delegation was in Hanoi several years ago we were told that the Vietnamese government knew of none. It is not hard to understand that families of men missing in Vietnam want to hope their relatives are still there; and there are, unfortunately, a few individuals who will play on this hope to make careers for themselves.

Certainly there are MIA's; almost any Vietnam vet can recall the speed with which vegatation grows in Vietnam. Even something as large as a downed plane would be almost invisible within a matter of years. There is no reason to believe that the Vietnamese government is not doing all it can to help find remains of U.S. servicemen and return them. It is not, however, an item of utmost priority. When VVAW visited Vietnam we were told that the Liberation Forces and the North Vietnamese had somewhere around 100,000 MIA's in South Vietnam, about 100 times the number of U.S. missing.

Peter Zastrow in Hanoi.

There is a reason why the MIA/POW issue refuses to disappear, a reason beyond the hope of the relatives. Ever since the U.S. lost the war in Vietnam, the U.S. government has been searching for ways to put its own spin on the outcome, to interpret what happened in Vietnam in a way which will not disturb plans for future U.S. incursions, invasions, aggressions or whatever.

How to justify a war which the U.S. lost and which grew more and more unpopular as the years progressed? One way to do this is to portray the enemy as the worst possible species of sub-humans--that is to say, people so low that they would hold gallant U.S. servicemen prisoner all these years after the end of the war. And so the U.S. government jumps on the POW/MIA issue and keeps it alive, knowing that if the U.S. people can be convinced that the invasion of Vietnam was right, they will also be convinced that the Panama invasion might be "right," and the invasion of Nicaragua or the Philippines or Cuba might also be "right."

For LeBoutillier, recognizing Vietnam is both a political and economic issue. The Russians are influential in Vietnam (the book was written while the USSR was still an "evil empire," and to LeBoutillier, it probably still is) but the U.S. has consistently pushed Vietnam into the Soviet camp by our actions. A Vietnamese official apparently whispered in the author's ear that CamRanh Bay, the massive U.S. base turned into a Soviet naval base following the U.S. retreat from Vietnam, could once again become a port for U.S. ships following recognition of Vietnam by the U.S. government. From this LeBoutillier has constructed an entire scenario with the USSR losing influence in Southeast Asia and the U.S. once again becoming a dominant power.

Of course the author cannot or will not apply his new-found understanding to U.S. actions elsewhere in the world. If the U.S. economic boycott of Vietnam helped to push Vietnam into the arms of the Soviet Union, how much more potent was a similar activity in our own hemisphere--as in Nicaragua or even Panama? Has the U.S. government learned anything? The answer, unfortunately, is yes, but all the wrong things.

Primary for LeBoutillier is that Vietnam is an economic plum waiting to be plucked, and the U.S. is the biggest and best plucker around. U.S. corporations are missing out on big bucks both in terms of markets and even more so in terms of investments. LeBoutillier visualizes another Hong Kong or South Korea where labor will be plentiful and cheap; he does not seem to realize that, as friendly as members of the Vietnamese government might be and as open as they are to economic changes, they are not open to exploitation of their people.

Vietnam is in sad economic straits, brought on in large part by the U.S. boycott. Vietnam needs the economic boost that could come from large-scale U.S. trade. Of course U.S. companies would benefit and increase profits; Vietnam would probably benefit more because the country is starting from poverty.

It seems as if Vietnam is being penalized for winning the war. U.S. economic aid to the defeated enemies of World War II is well known--and these countries are economic giants today. The U.S. did sign a treaty with Vietnam not only promising normal relations but reparations. All the conditions that the U.S. government has thrown up as roadblocks to normal relations--Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia, release of supposed political prisoners, among others--have been met.

The time has come. Normalize relations with Vietnam. All kinds of other reasons to normalize relations may arise, but the fundamental reason is that it's right. The U.S. government has no reason to refuse to deal with the nation of Vietnam; the people there need our help to repair some of the damage we've done to their country. We need relations and trade and the interchange of people and ideas from which we all can learn.

Resistance withing the Military During the Vietnam War

A Matter of Conscience

We are looking for veterans who participated in acts of resistance, either individual or organized, while serving in the military during the Vietnam War, for a project called **A Matter of Conscience: Resistance within the Military During the Vietnam War**, a series of portraits and oral histories of resistance vets.

In the recent resurgence of interest in the Vietnam War, one part of the history has been ignored: that of the widespread dissent within the military. We hope this project will help fill the void and further an understanding of the Vietnam War.

We are looking for veterans who took a variety of protests acts: refusing orders, desertion, working on GI newspapers, participation in organized GI anti-war groups, AWOL, sabotage, fraggings, assaults, etc.

To date we have interviewed 25 veterans, whose portraits and oral histories have been widely exhibited throughout the northeast and are currently part of a national touring exhibition called **A Different War: Vietnam in Art**. This project has been funded in part by the William Joiner Center for the Story of War and Social Consequences at the University of Massachusetts/Boston, the Lucius and Eva Eastman Fund and the Cambridge Art Council The Addison Gallery of American Art at the Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts has recently committed major funding for the completion of this project and is seeking a publisher for the project.

We will be travelling the country the summer of 1990 to interview and photograph resistance vets. We need your help. Please contact us if:

- You are a vet who resisted while on active duty and are willing to be interviewed.
- You know of a vet who resisted the war while on active duty.
- You are a member of an organization that would be willing to help us find resistance vets by sending a leaflet to your members, including a notice in your organization's newsletter or providing any other help in finding vets in your area.

Who We Are: Bill Short was a platoon sergeant with the First Infantry Division who after four months of combat refused to fight. He is now a photographer and artist-in-residence at the Addison Gallery, and teaches at Bradford College in Massachusetts. Willa Seidenberg is a freelance journalist.

Bill Short/Willa Seidenberg
69 Rindge Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140
Call Collect: 617-868-4132

In Nicaragua

Maude De Victor

In 1979, Maude De Victor put her personal life on the line for Vietnam Vets. She blew the whistle on the cover-up of Agent Orange and its health effects. As a result she lost her job, was the recipient of physical and death threats and is forever blacklisted from federal jobs. A member of VVAW, she has traveled extensively and spoken to groups of many sizes about Agent Orange and its terrible legacy.

Most recently, Maude was in Nicaragua, her second trip there as an official observer of the election process and VVAW representative. The following interview was conducted by ***The Veteran*** *on April 23, the day after Earth Day Activities in Chicago in which Maude De Victor was introduced* as the featured speaker.

The Vet: Maude we understand you were in Nicaragua recently to monitor the elections. Could you tell us about that trip?

Maude: Yes. I traveled to Nicaragua from February 17 to March 1st. I arrived in Managua and flew to Bluefield on the Atlantic Coast, about a 2 $^1/_2$ hour flight. While there I also journeyed by boat to La Frey, Panama and Rama Key.

The Vet: Were you traveling alone?

Maude: I was part of the Witness for Peace delegation, an ecumenical organization that has been monitoring the war in Nicaragua for 19 years. I was an official observers for the national election, assigned to the Bluefield Area by request of the residents. This was under the auspices of the United Nations and Organizations of America States. The UN role was quite large. I know that in Bluefields the UN had spent six months stockpiling supplies for the elections.

The Vet: Because the government wouldn't?

Maude: No, the government didn't have the resources to run the elections and needed the UN resources.

The Vet: What did you hear of former President Carter's role?

Maude: A lot of positive things. He was everywhere and because of his past, the power of his presence was immense. Politically he was neutral.

The Vet: Well, someone had to be. The U.S. government wasn't.

Maude: Carter was! The Nicaragua press monitored him closely. I heard a lot through the press pool. I also got my initial briefing form the Moravian Church. The staff working in the church was made up of former fighters who had been wounded fighting against the contras. Also there were vies of wounded veterans.

I also met with different women's groups. The women's groups in Bluefield were well organized and politically active. The Mesquito Indian women's groups were not as experienced. I encountered the first female Mesquito to graduated from high school. She spoke about the contradictions of being educated and then returning to tribal society. The Mesquites value their autonomy. There were never close to the Sandinistas. During the Samosa regime the government didn't pay much attention to the Atlantic Coast. The Indians called that the "old days" and view them with some nostalgia. The Sandinistas made some errors in dealing with the elections. They were bombarded with both Sandinista and UNO representatives. One good thing the Sandinistas did was to make posters of the UNO candidates using their photos when they were with Somosa's National

Guard, as most were, into "wanted"-style posters.

The Vet: Were things real wild leading up to the elections?

Maude: In Bluefield they weren't. The policy for the elections were followed. Campaigning stopped 72 hours before the polls opened. There were no alcohol sales 24 hours before.

The Vet: Any activity--buying of votes, things like that?

Maude: No, in fact it was so quiet it was scary. On the morning of Sunday, February 25th, the polls opened at 7:00. People had been standing in line since about 6:25. Fifty-plus, mostly old people. They said they didn't want to take chances, that they might die before they would be able to vote. They had such dignity about them, almost as if they had light coming from their eyes. Solemnly, they powered their votes, standing as if waiting to get diplomas or something. Old and sick were moved to the front of the line, young and healthy to the rear. They had their voter registration cards wrapped as if treasure--like the family Bibles--possibly the most valuable thing they owned.

The Vet: Well, we know the outcome of the national voting. The Sandinistas were defeated. Daniel Ortega maintained that the people of Nicaragua had voted with their stomachs. Is that true?

Maude: The people voted with their heads, their stomachs were empty. They felt that if they were to face the Somonistas again they would need to be healthy after five years of the U.S. economic boycott taking its toll. They faced starving children and animals. They voted to end the embargo, to save the country and to continue to define their destiny.

You much understand the Atlantic areas was devastated after the boycott. The hurricane was the final straw, wiping out commerce, industry agriculture--everything was changed.

People told me about being lashed to palm trees in neck deep water--watching their homes blow away. The tin roofs decapitated hundreds of people. The middle class and intellectuals migrated to Coast Rica creating the "brain drain".

The eco-system was turned upside-down. With palms gone the lagoon became hot changing the food sources.

The library and schools were destroyed. Portable water was non-existent. No quinine. One bottle of beer cost 300,000 cordobas. The U.S. exchange was 60,00 per dollar. A pack of cigarettes was 40,000. No medical supplies--no doctors, no dentists, no shores.

When the U.S. made demands for elections there was no equipment. All that came from Denmark and France.

The Vet: What were the reactions after the elections?

Maude: At first hopeful. UNO then indicated they were canceling the Agrarian Land Reform program returning the land to its "true" owners--the long absent gentry. Further, they sid UNO would not allow the autonomy of Bluefields. The people were calm and not really surprised. They said, "We will fight," and "Sandino said in 1933 the revolution would be won on the Atlantic Coast."

The Vet: And the future of Nicaragua?

Maude: The Sandinista party is still the largest single party in Nicaragua. They'll not go away. The Mesquito Indians feel that change is necessary. Nothing wrong with it but they'll to keep their autonomy.

The Vet: What is the potential of future elections?

Maude: Unforeseeable at this point. UNO is out of step with the people already. The Contras refuse to disarm . With 14 factions in UNO they lack to ability to function day-to-day. They're lacking any unity of will. The people will live their day-to-day life and wait.

The Vet: Thank you very much, Maude.

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John Lindquist
VVAW National Office

The last time we had an update on Agent Orange it concerned the qualifications needed for compensation under the Agent Orange lawsuit settlement. Basically, if you are not 100% disabled or dead, you don't get a thing.

Recently the Nehmer vs the U.S. Veterans Administration was settled. The following is a copy of the letter the V.A. sent out to all vets who had previously filed for a V.A. settlement.

LEGAL NOTICE

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN AGENT ORAGNE DISABILITY COMPENSATION OR DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (DIC)

The Court's decision in the lawsuit of Nehmer v. U.S. Veterans' Administration, 712 F. Supp. 1404 (N.D. Cal. 1989) ("Nehmer lawsuit") may affect your entitlement to diability compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, formerly known as the Veterans Administration ("VA"). The Nehmer lawsuit was brought on behalf of all current or former members of the U.S. Armed Forces, or their next of kin, who have had a claim denied by the VA, or have a claim pending, or are or will become eligible to file a claim for service-connected disability or death benefits arising from exposure during military service during the Vietnam war to herbicides containing dioxin. Dioxin is a chemical that was contained in the herbicide "Agent Orange" that was sprayed in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam war.

On May 3, 1989, U.S. District Judge Thelton Henderson overturned a portion of VA's regulations covering disability and death claims based on Agent Orange/dioxin exposure and all benefit denials made under those regulations.

As a result of the Court's decision, VA has begun to create regulations to cover Agent Orange related claims. You and other members of the pbulic may participate in this process (referred to as rulemaking proceeding).

Once VA published its new regulations, VA will provide written notice both to those of you denied benefits under the previous regulation (all claimants who submitted dioxin benefit claims that were denied by VA after September 25, 1985) and to those of you who have pending claims based on Agent Orange, and allow you a reasonable and specified time to present additional evidence and reasons why your claim should be granted under the new regulations. If you don't present any additional evidence, VA will examine your claim on the basis of the information already before it.

If you have not filed a cliam, you have a right to do so to seek compensation for any disability or death that you believe is connected with exposure to Agent Orange during military service. Any claim you now file will be decided under the rules VA ultimately adopts in the new rulemaking proceeding. If your claim is approved by VA, under the new regulations the amount of money you will receive may depend upon the date VA receives your claim. The earlier VA receives your claim, the more money you may receive if your claim is approved. Claims forms (VA Form 21-526 for service-connected disability claims and VA Form 21-534 for service-connected death claims) are available at any VA Regional Office.

If you already have filed a claim for compensation for a disability or death that you believe was connected with exposure to Agent Orange and that claim was finally denied (after all appeals, if any) by VA before September 26, 1985, the decision in the Nehmer lawsuit does not require VA to reopen your claim. However, you may now file a new claim. Any new claim you now file will be decided under the rules that VA ultimately adopts in the new rulemaking proceeding.

Questions about this notice and your rights can be answered by a benefits counselor at a VA Regional Office who can be reached by calling the local or "800" number listed under "United States Government" or "Veterans Administration" in your local telephone book. You can also contact the lawyers who represetnt the veterans or their next of kin who are class members in the Nehmer lawsuit. The address of these lawyers is:

Counsel for Plaintiffs' Class
National Veterans Legal Services Project
Attention: Nehmer Class Member Information
2001 S. Street, N.W.
Suite 610
Washington, DC 20009

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

View on Panama

moritorium on layoffs.

On March 1st, (ex-)residents of Chorrillo occupied the Puente de las Americas for nearly five hours, demanding that the new government and the U.S. make good on their promises to rebuild Chorrillo. Many are beginning to doubt the regime's intentions as there have been rumors that Endara intends to renovate the area, prime beach-front real estate, into highrise apartments for the middle class. On March 10th another march by state employees and laid-off workers was violently repressed by forces from the Southern Command and the newly created "Panamanian Public Security Forces."

If this sort of instability is not enough, the country is under occupation by a foreign power. This occupation insures that the U.S. will be in control of the situation and that its forces will impose the strategic plans of Southern Command. Since the invasion, troops have been actively imposing an "old style" colonial regime and backing it up with acts of repression and intimidation. For instance, On February 15, just two weeks before the re-opening of the University, a column of U.S. troops moved into the Campus to intimidate students. On this occasion, U.S. troops said they had gotten "lost," an excuse which is becoming quite old.

On February 21, U.S. troops arrested 15 former PDF soldiers for the "murder" of a U.S. citizen named Dragzeth who was killed during the invasion and was known to be a naval intelligence officer. If his death is murder, they why aren't Panamanian civilian casualities labelled "murder" also?

U.S. forces, as mentioned above, were involved, on March 10, in repressing a labor demonstration. That same weekend, U.S. forces conducted large-scale operations in some poor neighborhoods in the Capital which involved arresting some 700 individuals. In a similar operation on March 14th, U.S. troops arrested another 300. The excuse for these sweeps was that they were searching for weapons and drugs; in Panama, however, it is known that those arrested were on an "enemies" list drawn up by the minister of government and justice, Ricardo Arias-Calderon.

The situation forces Panamanians into conflict with the occupation forces and creates a growing resentment. On March 2nd, a bar frequented by U.S. soldiers was bombed killing two U.S. servicemen and wounding 16 others. There are also persistent reports of ongoing fighting in the countryside which may have resulted in the downing of two U.S. helicopters towards the end of March. Pressure affects U.S. troops also; several soldiers have been arrested on drug charges and, according to CNN, two other were arrested for "killing a prisoner and severely beating another." Finally, there have been reports of acts of intimidation against banana workers and against offices of an independent human rights commission.

As the situation continues to deteriorate, it is crucially important for progressive and anti-intervention forces in the U.S. to take an active stand against U.S. occupation of Panama. People have to look beyond the mainstream media to inform themselves of the crises Panamanians face. This is how we will be able to combat the criminal activities of imperialism and the future plans the imperialists have for Panama. Among the important forces in the U.S. opposing intervention has been VVAW which was at our side before the invasion and which has continued to organize arouind the issue where others have remained largely on the sidelines. For VVAW's role in the struggle against foreign intervention in general, and in particular, VVAW's solidarity with the people of Panama, WE COMMEND AND THANK YOU.

(The author of this article was born and raised in Panama; he has lived in the U.S. since 1981, but was in Panama from August, 1989 through February 1990.)

Interview with Leader of Patriotic Union

Diego Montaña On Colombia

Colombia, one of the most violent countries in the Western Hemisphere, is constantly being rocked by bombings in the cities, armed skirmishes in the countryside and terrible assassinations anywhere, anytime. Those who work for social change are the main targets of the violence. One organization, the Patriotic Union (UP), has 1044 members at the hands of death squads since its inception in 1986. The UP's senior leader, Diego Montana, recently visited the U.S. and Insight Features interviewed him on the "drug war," U.S. policy and the future of Colombia.

First some biography: Diego Montana Cuellar first answered his political calling when he was elected student representative to the City Council of Bogota in 1934. He went on to become a Congressmen, Secretary of Government, Acting Mayor of Bogota, Embassy Secretary in Chile, Council General in Santiago, Advisor to Worker's Trade Union of Fedepetrol, Professor at Free University and National University, author, and Acting Chairman of the Patriotic Union (a coalition movement of the left). He was re-elected to Congress this March and visited the U.S. in April. The following interview was conducted in Chicago by Alynne Romo, an associate editor of Insight Features and a steering committee member of the International Forum Coalition.

Q: Due to the limitations of the media, our view of Colombia from the U.S. is distorted and a bit murky. Almost all the news we hear about your country is associated with the drug question. How did drug-trafficking become such a large component of Colombian life?

Montana: There have been three great bonanzas in Colombia. The first arose some years back with the mining and trade in emeralds. Prior to that, it took many generations to become rich in Colombia. After the emeralds, prosperity came with marijuana along with coffee smuggling. When Colombian marijuana became inferior to the marijuana now grown here in your country, the prosperity associated with cocaine emerged on the scene.

So there are now three professions in which fortunes can be acquired in a few weeks; three jobs that can make certain lowlife people very rich: the hired hitmen, emerald hunters and, above all, drug smugglers.

Remember that Colombia is not a great cocaine producer or consumer--it is the corridor through which drugs are moved from Peru and Bolivia to North America. The primary importance of Colombia to cocaine smugglers is that we have remote jungle regions that permit traffickers to set up large processing plants.

The second greatest factor is the development in Colombia of a transport system to move the drugs, especially skilled pilots, who run the risk of transporting the coke on American aircraft, through American defenses, and largely to benefit the accounts of American interests. The cocaine traffic requires a very complex infrastructure from one end to the other and a very powerful network of support.

Ultimately, the final beneficiaries of the cocaine trade are the great bankers of the U.S. Some Colombian economists like Salman Kalmanowitz state that only 15% of the money earned goes to Colombia, while 85% goes to the income of the American, Japanese and European financial network.

Of Colombia's drug cartels, those based in the cities of Medellin and Cali are the largest. Medellin is the most bloody--that is the one the notorious Gacha used to belong to. He was a demented person. He acquired a million hectares of land. He was a killer of members of the UP, including two of our senators. He bragged about being anti-communist. He was captured by the Colombian armed forces and killed last December.

Diego Montana receives VVAW bandana from VVAW members Barry Romo & Evan Douthit. Photo by C. Davidon.

The Cali cartel is more "civilized." It is made of high-class businessmen. There is a saying in Colombia--that the CIA works with Medellin, and the DEA works with Cali!

Q: From the perspective of Latin America, how do you view the involvement of the U.S. government in the drug wars?

Montana: When the Cold War ended with an pact with Gorbachev, the U.S. military and its friends needed something to keep themselves in business. Now with the excuse of combating drugs they are arming the contras--*all the contras in this world.*

At this moment in Latin America, U.S. militarism is seeking to maintain the struggle that once existed between East and West. Except now it is being redirected into a conflict between North and South. The essence of U.S. foreign policy is to have the counter-revolution *first, before* the revolution even gets a chance to get off the ground. They do this by setting up counter-insurgency programs.

This is the "National Security Doctrine" developed by the Pentagon. It sees the security threat to be faced by the armed forces of a given country as coming, not from abroad, but from the people of the country itself. The armies in Latin America have been trained in and structured around this doctrine.

For example, the Colombian government, under pressure from the left and other forces, is struggling against the drug traffickers. The U.S. government stepped in and offered planes and helicopters. However, those weapons are not that useful against drug traffickers, but they are effective against peasants. The U.S. government is seeking to impose its military force on the people of Colombia.

The Colombian government refused to accept the intervention of U.S. troops. President Bush's response was to mobilize air craft carriers to watch the Colombian coast and to do overflights. The massive opposition of the people forced the Colombian government to stand up and reject the U.S. coercion.

Q: You're suggesting that the U.S. aircraft offered to Colombia is really intended for use against popular rural movements. Could you give us some perspective on those struggles?

Montana: The guerrilla movement, which has existed for 40 years, arose because of the repression of peasants in their struggle for land. The peasants who took up arms had been forced to move from developed areas to peripheral areas through what was really a form of armed colonization. The most distant areas where the government's influence never reached--like near the Amazon--is where these "new colonies" were established.

In 1985 these guerrillas made a truce with the government. The government agreed to broaden democracy and the rebels agreed to end the armed struggle. The Patriotic Union was then born. The UP sought to allow the incorporation of these forces into legal activities. So, in 1986 we took part in the elections. We received great support in rural areas and elected 15 congressmen, hundreds of municipal council members and some 60 mayors. It was quite a historical victory.

Then began the war of extermination against us. The Senator and the Representative from the State of Meta were both murdered. The Representative of Magdalena Medio, an oil producing zone, was murdered. Mayors and city officials in Uraba, a banana producing area were murdered.

These selective exterminations had the goal of preventing a movement that had momentum and support from becoming a majority movement. They were eliminating a possibility.

In the beginning, the extermination was limited to leaders. Then came the attacks on the masses. By 1988 there were genocides of entire towns who were only suspected UP sympathizers. Or they were banana workers dancing at a fiesta or an Easter celebration. Since 1985, 1044 members of our organization have been killed.

Q: By whom--the drug traffickers?

Montana: In Colombia, the struggle against land reform has been reinforced by organizing the property-owners into regional groups. Using the pretext of guerrilla activities and kidnappings, the landowners organize militarily. The army gave them arms and training. They then formed paramilitary groups.

The drug traffickers, who launder funds by buying large tracts of land, import mercenaries from Australia and Great Britain who teach them how to kill efficiently. There are schools for the hitmen. The exterminations benefit the counter-revolutionaries, drug-traffickers and landlords.

Q: How do you propose to deal with the drug issue?

Montana: There are really two problems; one we can do something about, the other we can't. The demand for drugs is a world problem that must be solved by the United States and the other consumer countries. Narco-terrorism, on the other hand, is a problem that can be solved in Colombia. The government has approached the trafficking problem. There is a sector of the armed forces that has been fighting against traffickers. But there are two groups in the armed forces--one against and one supporting the Medellin cartel. There is a network of informers and none of the big crimes are under investigation.

Q: There have been a number of summits on a range of issues throughout Latin America in the past couple of years. The

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INSIGNIA

U.S. Military Assistance Command (MACV) [official design by the Institute of Heraldry, U.S. Army]. Under this insignia 60,000 Americans and 2 million Vietnamese died.

"Yellow and red are the Vietnam colors. The red ground alludes to the infiltration and aggression from beyond the embattled yellow "wall", (i.e. The Great Wall of China). The opening in the wall through which this infiltration and aggression flow is blocked by the white sword representing United States military aid and support. the world is arched and the sword pointed upward in reference to the offensive action pushing the aggression back."

It was first issued to the 12,000 "advisors" in Vietnam in March of 1963.

INSIGNIA OF VIETNAM VETS AGAINST THE WAR

We took the MACV patch as our own, replacing the word with the upside-down rifle with helmet, the international symbol of Soldiers killed in action. This was done to expose the lies and hypocrisy of U.S. aggression in vietnam as well as its cost in human lives. As with all the propaganda put out by the government to justify U.S. intervention in Indochina, the MACU insignia also put forward lies. The U.S. military was not protecting the Vietnamese from invasion from the People's Republic of China, but was instead trying to "save" Vietnam from itself and for our exploitation.

Our insignia has come to represent veterans fighting against new "adventures" like the Vietnam War, while at the some time fighting for a decent way of life for veterans and their families.

Our insignia is 20 years old. It belongs to VVAW and nc other organization or group may use it for any reason without permission.

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Who We Are, Who Can Join

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR began in 1967 when veterans of the Vietnam war took up the cause of ending that war. Since then VVAW has continued to fight against unjust wars and military adventures, and for the rights and needs of veterans. Today VVAw stands firmly for peace and for social justice at home and around the world.

As the oldest organization based primarily among Vietnam vets, VVAW confronted the problems of post-traumatic stress among veterans early in our history; we took up the cause of testing, treatment and compensation for victims of Agent Orange poisoning, and still are fighting that battle which has grown to include use of dioxins around the country. We continue to believe in the rights of veterans of all eras to be treated with respect and dignity, especially by the government and Veterans Administration.

Although based on Vietnam veterans, membership in VVAW has expanded to include veterans and friends of veterans from all eras, all of whom bring their own ideas and perspectives to the organization. As the time of the Vietnam war recedes in history, VVAW members try to keep alive the lessons from that war. We share with others the hope that our children--and any of America's young--will never again have to fight a war such as the one we fought, and that the lives of our fiends who died in Vietnam will service to make another such venture more difficult. To that cause VVAW stands dedicated.

VVAW IS A NATIONAL VETERANS ORGANIZATION.
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(201) 963-3380
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Membership Form

Fighting for Veterans, Peace & Justice since 1967
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P.O. Box 408594
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Date _____

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VVAW welcomes all people who want to join to build a veterans' organization to fight for peace and justice. Although most of our mem-bers are vets of the Vietnam era, we want all veterans of all ages--as well as interested non-vets--to join to help prevent more Vietnams. The initiation fee is $5 to be sent to the National Office.

VVAW is a democratic organization. Chapters decide on local programs and projects under the general guidelines of the national program. Chapters elect local leadership and representatives to annual national meeting where major organizational decisions are made and national coordinators elected. These coordinators are responsible for day-to-day organizational leadership and publishing of THE VETERAN.

Signature _____

(Make checks payable to VVAW; all contributions are tax-deductible.)

Clarence Fitch

March 2, 1948 - May 7, 1990

The memory of Clarence will live in our struggle for a better world, one free of war, racism and exploitation.

Clarence was a combat marine veteran who used his experience in Vietnam to educate others. He was active in high school and community outreach and counter-recruiting.

He was active in the working class participation in the union at the post office, as well as the anti-apartheid movement.

Opposing U.S. intervention in Central America, he traveled to Nicaragua in 1986 and to Panama several months before the U.S. invasion.

He served on the New York/New Jersey coordinating committee and was the east cost coordinator until his health forced him to step back a bit.

Clarence was an inspiration to us all. His smile and his ready wit, his friendship and his leadership will be missed.

Our deepest sympathy goes to his widow Elena, his daughter and family.

As of the printing of The Veteran condolences were received from organizations in the U.S., Asia and Latin America.

Clarence and Elena Schwolski Fitch (Center) with National Coordinator David Cline (left) and leader of New York Homeless.

Clarence meeting with Jessi Jackson at VVAW's 20th Anniversary celebration.

Some last thoughts from Elena

For Clarence
Our dear, sweet Clarence
Husband, father, son, brother, uncles, friend.
Companero en La Lucha.
Your loud, strong voice
Still fills the rooms our hears
Giving us news from the good fight
Or the score of the latest Dodgers fame.
You gave us everything you had
Holding nothing back.
And taking no prisoners.
We Love you more than you probably knew.
We'll miss you more than you could have imagined.
Rest in peace, my sweet Clarence
But send us a sign every once in awhile
To keep us honest.